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THE GENTILE WIFE

THE GENTILE WIFE

BY

RITA WELLMAN

A Play in Four Acts

NEW YORK

MOFFAT, YARD & COMPANY

1919

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Duplicate money

**COPYRIGHT, 1919,
By MOFFAT, YARD & COMPANY**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Staged by ARTHUR HOPKINS. Settings by ROBERT EDMUND JONES

"There's but one gift that all our dead desire,
One gift that men can give, and that's a dream,
Un'less we too can burn with that same fire
Of sacrifice; die to the things that seem;

Die to the little hatreds; die to greed;
Die to the old ignob'le selves we knew;
Die to the base contempts of sect and creed,
And rise again, like these, with souls as true."

CHARACTERS

DAVID DAVIS.....	DAVID POWELL
MRS. DAVIS, his mother.....	VERA GORDON
JACOB DAVIS, his father.....	W. H. THOMPSON
CHRISTINA, his aunt.....	MRS. A. ASHEROFF
RUBY, his sister	AMY DENNIS
EVA GOLDSCHMIDT, his sister.....	LITTA MABIE
HERMAN GOLDSCHMIDT, her husband.....	STANLEY JESSUP
NAIDA, David's wife.....	EMILY STEVENS
JANE ALLEN.....	ELEANOR MONTELL
DR. MACKENZIE.....	FRANK CONROY
DR. HOTCHKISS.....	CHARLES HAMMOND
CAROLINE.....	VIRGINIA CURTIS

ACT I.—Room in a fashionable hotel in New York, in March.

ACT II.—Room at "Roselands," Long Island, in September.

ACT III.—Breakfast porch at "Roselands." The following morning.

ACT IV.—Same as Act II. September of the following year.

PRODUCED IN DECEMBER, ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN, AT THE VANDERBILT THEATRE, NEW YORK

DEDICATION

To the managers who have rejected my plays,

To the friends who have given me advice,

To the American Public,

**To all those, in fact, who make the doing of a good
thing so difficult—and therefore impossible not to
try.**

THE GENTILE WIFE

ACT I

SCENE: *The drawing room of a hotel apartment.*

Elaborate. Door a little left at back. A recessed window on left wall. A large door at right angles (right) leads into bed room which is partly visible. The entrance door left leads into a private passage way which has, of course, a door beyond which communicates with the public corridor. NAIDA is opening the private door. She is an attractive woman of about twenty-seven. JANE ALLEN comes into the passage and greets NAIDA. She is quite pretty and overdressed.

NAIDA

Why, it's little Jane Allen.

JANE

How are you? Oh, I am so glad to see you Naida. You haven't changed a bit.

NAIDA

How did you find me? Whatever made you think of coming to see me?

JANE

Curiosity.

NAIDA

Jane!

JANE

Of course not, darling. I wanted to see you again after

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all these months . . . naturally. You know I always adored you if you can't sing High E without standing on your tip toes. It's a nice hotel, isn't it? What a lovely little room! How many have you?

NAIDA

Only this . . . and the other.

But sit down. Come over here. . . . You get such a wonderful view of Fifth Avenue from here. I never get tired of sitting here and watching all the things going by way down there below me.

JANE

Isn't it dreadful to think how much you have to pay in New York for the privilege of seeing other people look like ants?

But tell me something about your marriage. No one dreamed of your doing such a thing. It's positively thrilling. We were all talking about you the other night. You were so determined. You were the most ambitious one of our crowd. Why you were set on grand opera—no less. Are you going on with your music, Naida?

NAIDA

Of course. Why not? I don't intend to give up my career just because I happen to be married.

JANE

Happen to be married is good. What is your husband like? Where did you meet him?

NAIDA

You were supposed to come that night. It was the supper Alice gave after her recital. Don't you remember?

JANE

Of course. I had tonsillitis. Will I ever forget it? I was going to give a recital the next day myself. My dear, would you believe it . . . I was up at Hoffenders just Monday and they didn't have a thing for me. What are singers to do? All people want is to go to moving pictures

and listen to free lectures. Not even a vaudeville house would take me. But you were going to tell me something about your husband. What is his name? Alice was telling me . . . Paul, . . .

NAIDA

No . . . David.

JANE

Oh, yes, how stupid of me. I knew it was one of the prophets or something. Well, don't stop . . .

NAIDA

There is really nothing to tell. We had a wonderful little supper. Oh, I can't remember who was there. Celebrities . . .

JANE

Oh, yes, Alice always has celebrities.

NAIDA

Henrietta Walden sang.

JANE

Agony, I suppose?

NAIDA

Pretty bad.

JANE

Who else?

NAIDA

Reggie Woods sat on one side of me.

NAIDA

Reggie of all people in the world! Did he make you feel his diaphragm?

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NAIDA

Yes, now that I think of it. We all three got to talking about diaphragms.

JANE

Who . . . David?

NAIDA

Yes . . . David. Then every one around our table began to talk about diaphragms. Then everybody had to punch and pound every one's else diaphragm.

JANE

So that's how you got acquainted.

NAIDA

There's no romance really. How is everybody? I haven't heard from a soul.

JANE

Everybody is just the same. Going to be famous some day. What does your husband do? Alice said he was a professor or something.

NAIDA

He is a biologist.

JANE

A bi-what?

NAIDA

A biologist. Don't you know what a biologist is?

JANE

No . . . do you?

NAIDA

Of course. They . . . dissect things, you know. Pick animals to pieces . . . all that . . .

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JANE

What a horrid profession. Does he do that sort of thing here?

NAIDA

How absurd. Of course not, Jane. He works in a laboratory. He teaches, too.

JANE

Isn't that funny?

NAIDA

What do you mean?

JANE

The things that happen. Who would ever have thought to see you tearing around the conservatory that some day you would marry a man who picks animals to pieces.

NAIDA

(Offended.)

It is very interesting. To know how things are made. Very wonderful. I intend to take it up myself.

JANE

Oh, I don't doubt it. Do you remember that red haired girl . . . you know who I mean . . . her one ambition in life was to sing Salome. Well, she married an undertaker. Now she gets quite emotional over the subject of embalming fluid. I saw her the other day. Even her hair has changed. Did you have much of a trousseau?

NAIDA

No. We only went to Florida . . . for a few weeks. David couldn't be away very long. All my things are for summer, of course. Would you like to see any of them?

JANE

Naida, I've been dying to, of course.

[11]

NAIDA

(Going to left room.)

I really didn't get very much. We picked them out together.

JANE

I should imagine the clothes picked out by a bi-lol-o-gist would be very interesting. You couldn't get me a cocktail, could you, dearie? My throat is parched.

NAIDA

Of course. How stupid of me. I will order one for you. Don't you want something to eat? A sandwich?

JANE

No, thanks. Where did you say Mr. Davis gets his money?

NAIDA

I don't know.

(Returns with several gowns over her arm.)

Here are some of the things . . .

JANE

Darling! What a sweet little negligée.

NAIDA

I've never worn it.

JANE

Why not? Isn't it becoming? It ought to be. Whew! It came from Corinne.

NAIDA

It's too theatrical. I've never been able to see why a woman should look like a courtesan just because she hasn't her dress on.

JANE

Naida, you've become a Puritan.

[12]

NAIDA

I always was.

JANE

(*Knowingly.*)

Ah, la, la, la, la.

NAIDA

Oh, well, maybe not in the strictest sense.

JANE

That's better. Here's another from Corinne. You mean to say you've been married . . . how long is it, anyway?

NAIDA

Three weeks.

JANE

You've been married three weeks and you don't know where your husband's money comes from?

NAIDA

No, I don't know. What difference does it make?

JANE

Well, I would want to know. He might steal it for all you know.

NAIDA

Oh, I know he doesn't do that.

JANE

How do you even know he's rich?

NAIDA

I don't. (*Takes dresses into room right again.*)

JANE

Why for all you know, all this . . . this hotel and all . . .

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this might just be honeymoon grandeur. You may have to settle down to some little furnished room and a professor's salary. Did you ever think of that?

NAIDA

No. I never think of such things. Did you notice how wonderfully the sun is shining? It is almost spring. I can feel spring in the air today.

JANE

I suppose those Adams people who helped you will cut you off now that you have a husband.

NAIDA

Oh, they won't send me any money any more. In fact, I have begged them not to.

(There is a knock at the door.)

What kind of a cocktail do you want?

JANE

I don't care . . . a Bronx.

(Naida goes to the door and gives the servant the order and receives from him a florist's box.)

NAIDA

Oh, look, Jane. Roses!

JANE

How do you know they're roses?

NAIDA

Oh, I know it.

(Opens box.)

I told you. Look! La France roses. They're the sweetest of all.

There is a letter, too. You don't mind if I read it, do you, Jane?

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JANE

Go ahead.

(She arranges flowers in a vase.)

NAIDA

(who has read the letter intently)

Oh, Jane!

JANE

I see . . . a love letter.

NAIDA

I am the luckiest woman in the world.

JANE

When did you see him last?

NAIDA

This morning at ten.

JANE

And now it's five . . . a box of roses and a letter.

NAIDA

Is it ridiculous?

JANE

No . . . it's honeymoon.

NAIDA

Oh, please don't use that stupid word. I hate it. I hate marriage for that reason.

JANE

You hate marriage?

NAIDA

Yes, everything is so regulated. Everything is so trite. Everyone you meet is always ready to tell you all about it.

[15]

JANE

Now I understand.

NAIDA

What do you understand, Jane?

JANE

Nothing. Don't you think we ought to get some water for the roses?

NAIDA

You mean something about me . . . Alice told you then . . .

JANE

Well, she did, if you want to know it.

NAIDA

I'm not ashamed of what Alice told you . . . they all knew it. You mean that I lived with David three months before we were married.

JANE

I am not holding that up against you, Naida. Heavens, I don't care about such things. It isn't your *not* being married that surprised me . . . it's your *getting* married. Why did you do it?

NAIDA

David. He hated the other way.

JANE

Oh, I see . . . then he's proper.

NAIDA

No, he's busy. It takes a great deal of your attention—the other way.

[16]

JANE

(Laughing.)

Oh, Naida, I never knew you were a cynic.

NAIDA

But we're going on just as if we weren't married. I mean . . . it isn't going to make any difference.

JANE

You're set on being happy, is that it?

NAIDA

Oh, yes. That is the only thing that matters. One must have that. Never make a compromise, Jane. Never consent to just live along. I will never do that again. Now that I know what real life is.

JANE

What is real life, may I ask?

NAIDA

To be glad of every breath you draw. To smile as you are going to sleep that the good morning will surely come . . . the blessed day. To see beauty and wonder in everything. Oh, I can't tell you. It's just being alive . . .

JANE

Just being in love, you mean.

(As there is a knock at the door.)

My little bronx is knocking. Go let the little darling in.

NAIDA

(Going to the door.)

I ordered tea for myself.

JANE

He doesn't approve of cocktails?

[17]

NAIDA

It isn't that. But I thought perhaps the idea . . . If he came in and saw me . . . We have these queer ideas, you know, about the people we care for . . . I suppose its absurd. Is yours alright?

JANE

Smells divinely.

(Raises her glass.)

To your grandchildren.

(Drinks.)

NAIDA

When we first came here we used to have our breakfasts on this little table.

JANE

Why don't you still? Is there anything wrong with it?

NAIDA

Oh, no. David got tired of eating up here. He said it made him feel so . . . rimminy-pimminy-Francesca de Rimmini.

JANE

What in the name of heaven is that?

NAIDA

It's a little expression of David's.

JANE

So he has little expressions, has he?

NAIDA

That is the only one. I admit it is rather absurd. Somehow, it's like David.

JANE

Has he a black mustache—sort of a decided black mustache?

[18]

NAIDA

Why, yes. What made you ask?

JANE

Oh, nothing. I seem to see him with a small black mustache. Do you know, I imagine he hasn't much sense of humor.

NAIDA

It's a rather whimsical sense of humor.

JANE

I know . . . Rimminy pimminy.

NAIDA

If you are going to ridicule my husband.

JANE

(Laughing.)

I'm not at all. I'm making fun of you. Because you are so happy—and I'm jealous. This cocktail has gone to my head I think. I suppose the first thing you'll do, Naida, will be to have dozens of babies and give up singing entirely, and all of your ambitions will go to bang. It always happens that way.

NAIDA

Oh, I want to live, Jane. I'm not going to let ambition cheat me out of life. I want to suffer and know things. I'm not going to be a cold, barren, singing machine. You might as well be a phonograph if you are going to order your life that way.

JANE

Can it be done? It takes a giantess to live and have a career at the same time.

NAIDA

(Laughing.)

I am going to be a giantess then. I feel strong enough to have ten careers.

JANE

Look out! First thing you know you'll be wanting to have ten husbands.

NAIDA

Oh, no. When you really love, Jane, one man is ten men to you. He is always changing, always presenting some new, wholly unimagined side. Why, the other day David was telling me about his student days in Leipsic, and he seemed then like an entirely different person . . . some one I had never known before.

JANE

So he went to school in Leipsic, did he? I suppose he is terribly well educated.

NAIDA

He has a wonderful brain. Since I have known him I have regretted that I never had an education.

JANE

Thank God for it, Naida. An education would have ruined you. Well, I ought to be going.

NAIDA

Stay and meet David.

JANE

No . . . I can't
(*Opens bag.*)

Oh, my dear, would you believe it . . . I've got to ask you to lend me some money. Do you think I'm awful?

NAIDA

Of course not, Jane. How much do you want?

JANE

You haven't twenty dollars have you, dearie?

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NAIDA

I will see.

(Goes into room left.)

JANE

It's awfully good of you. -I haven't forgotten that I owe you some already. You always were so generous. You know, aunt is always worrying about me in New York . . .

(Sighing.)

I'm perfectly safe.

NAIDA

Here it is.

JANE

Thanks, dearie. This will help out wonderfully.

(Gathering her things together.)

If I would consent to debase my art, I could go into vaudeville and make money. It's getting harder for real artists every day . . . It's been wonderful seeing you again—so happily married.

NAIDA

Oh, this must be David now. Isn't that nice?

(As David enters)

This is Jane Allen, David. This is David, Jane.

JANE

Awfully glad to know you.

DAVID is medium height, dark. High strung. Spare body with head somewhat too large. Essentially the thinker. Something of the aesthete. He is absent minded, detached, but at present quickened by NAIDA and her passionate love for him. He carries several medical books.

NAIDA

Won't you stay now, Jane?

No . . . can't. Have to go to tea. Did you know Anna

Tree has a job at the New York? She gives them classic music with their cocktails. I suppose nobody listens, anyway. Don't you think it is terrible the way art is treated in New York, Mr. Davis? But then you are a bi-lol-o-gist. Well, good bye, dearie. Thanks awfully. Come to see me. Good bye.

(She goes out.)

NAIDA

It's been such a bore. I hate everyone now but you.

DAVID

(Kissing her.)

We are getting quite impossible.

NAIDA

I got your wonderful letter. You are so marvelous. I am so confused with all this happiness.

DAVID

I wonder why it is that happiness always supprises us . . . unhappiness never does.

NAIDA

Oh, don't be philosophical, David.
Let me look at you. You look tired.

DAVID

I am.

(Sits on the chaise longue right.)

This is the first day I have been seriously to work since . . . You are such a luxurious little thing, Naida. You never know what it is to feel the necessity to work. I honestly believe you could spend your whole life lying on a couch with silk cushions and perhaps flowers to arrange in tall vases.

NAIDA

And someone to dream about.

[22]

DAVID

(*Laughing.*)

Of course. Now tell me what you have done to spend the time since I left.

NAIDA

Well, let me see. I had breakfast . . . that was about eleven. Then I read the morning paper. Did you read about the new scandal? The Hollister murder?

NAIDA

It is the usual old story. The right remains the same, ished by society, no matter whether the murder was justified by society, no matter whether the murder was justified or not.

NAIDA

But if he was insane? Of course he is guilty. I suppose he is to be punished, too. But David, do you think that a man who adores his wife can know of her infidelity without going practically insane—for the time being, any way? Think of yourself . . .

DAVID

(*Arranging books in case, right.*)

My dear child, he has no right to do any such thing . . . to adore her to the point of insanity. Two people come together because they have certain harmonious traits, certain qualities in common. They come, because of these, to love each other. If they continue to love each other these traits mingle and bind them closer. If the wife, in a moment of weakness, yields to the influence of another man, it is the husband's place to discover sanely whether his wife is, in spite of all, still in harmony with him. He may discover that she is . . . then he must fight for her fairly. He may discover that she is not, then he must give her up to the other man. It seems to me that no love is worth anything at all if you are to accept it as a matter of course, or as a matter of legal ownership.

NAIDA

But you speak of harmonious traits . . . That may be one kind of love . . . but I don't think all love is that.

DAVID

What is it then?

NAIDA

Oh, I am not so clever at definitions, David. I can't reason as you can. But love . . . the thing that brings people together . . . Well, I don't know that I would call it harmony of traits.

DAVID

Well, let me hear your definition.

NAIDA

It's a . . . sort of terrible . . . a sort of earthquake.

DAVID

(Laughing.)

That is simply a result of love. That isn't the cause.

NAIDA

Yes, yes, you don't know what I mean.

DAVID

(Sitting beside her.)

Well, let us leave the Hollisters. What did you do after absorbing the scandal?

NAIDA

I read about the election, too.

DAVID

You were never interested in politics, Naida.

NAIDA

I mean to be, though. I've tried hard to remember the names of all those men concerned. I read all about the election before I even touched the trial.

[24]

DAVID

(Laughing.)

As a sort of penance for your pleasure.

NAIDA

Oh, I do want to be clever, David. I hate stupidity.
Do you think I am very stupid, David?

DAVID

(Not reassuringly.)

Not at all. Not at all.

NAIDA

You don't say that very reassuringly.

DAVID

I think you have a good mind, Naida.

NAIDA

Don't try to be kind. I know. I know how to sing and I know how to be charming. That is all. You should have married a wonderful woman who could talk to you in seven languages about everything under the sun.

DAVID

Naida, listen to me for a moment. I want to talk to you in plain English about something important.

NAIDA

Of course. But what could you have to say to me that is important . . . except that you love me.

DAVID

There is something, though. I was on the street—just jumping into a taxi to come here . . .

NAIDA

(Dreamily.)

You see I got your roses, David. I love the roses you send me. Please always send me roses.

[25]

DAVID

But please listen, dear.

NAIDA

I am listening. Go on . . . what did you say, David?

DAVID

Naida, I am afraid I have done something I said I wouldn't.

NAIDA

David!

DAVID

I met my sister on the street.

NAIDA

(Changed at once.)

Your sister? Which sister is that?

DAVID

My married sister? The whole family is upset on account of our . . .

NAIDA

Well, go on . . . our marriage.

DAVID

You see, they don't understand.

NAIDA

Of course not. Did you think they would?

DAVID

Well, she stood there talking to me. In fact, she made me talk. Oh, well, there was nothing else for me to do. They're in town . . .

NAIDA

David, you didn't break your promise?

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DAVID

She kept at me so . . .

NAIDA

And you . . .

(*Rising.*)

Oh, David!

DAVID

What could I do? I had to ask them here.

NAIDA

Them?

DAVID

Yes, my mother and sister.

NAIDA

You asked them *here!*

DAVID

Yes. After all, it is only natural, dear . . .

NAIDA

You promised me, though. You know how I feel about families.

DAVID

But, really when you come to think about it, isn't it an unreasonable feeling?

NAIDA

You didn't love me because of my reasonableness, did you?

DAVID

But, dearest child, you must think reasonably at times. You can't go on forever . . . no one can . . . in a sort of . . .

NAIDA

A sort of what?

[27]

DAVID

A sort of romantic dream, I suppose you might call it.

NAIDA

Why don't more people? Why must we always be *reasonable*?

DAVID

Because of other people.

NAIDA

I hate other people.

DAVID

I know you do.

NAIDA

Other people are always trying to make you like themselves. Why can't I be like my own self? I'm not hurting anyone, am I?

DAVID

You won't have to see them often. They want to know you, that is all. Families are made that way. They want to gather in all who are near to those whom they love. That is a natural thing.

NAIDA

I know your sister is going to call you "Dave" and treat you like a college boy. That is what I hate so.

DAVID

(Laughing.)

Oh, sister and I have always been pals.

NAIDA

Yes, that is the worst kind.

So they are coming here . . . *here*.

[28]

DAVID

Well, I could scarcely ask them to see us downstairs, could I?

NAIDA

You don't feel these things. This place is sacred to me. Everything in it cries out about our love and how gloriously happy we have been here. Why I couldn't stand seeing Jane here today. It seemed desecration.

DAVID

(Smiling.)

Naida, you are simply a child.

NAIDA

Oh, please don't laugh at me. When are they coming?

DAVID

I said at five or half past. I knew you would be ready then.

NAIDA

I must change my gown.

DAVID

That isn't necessary at all. You look charming in that, Naida.

NAIDA

I know I do. I don't want to look charming. I'm going in and put on that blue thing we both detest.

DAVID

And you say you aren't a child.

NAIDA

Well perhaps I am, if being a child is to feel things that other people don't bother about.

(Embracing him.)

You know I love you, my dear, my dear. How can I ever make you understand?

DAVID

I do. Please know that I do.

NAIDA

No, no, no you don't. Kiss me.

DAVID

(Kissing her.)

Sometimes I wonder if I did wrong . . . a prosaic college professor to ever dare to want you . . .

NAIDA

You are so far above me . . .

DAVID

Naida, there's something I haven't told you . . . something that may hurt you.

NAIDA

Hurt me? You, David? How could you hurt me?

DAVID

I have been dishonest with you. At least I have neglected to tell you the truth. I don't know why. Perhaps I thought it would never make any difference. I don't think it will.

NAIDA

But, David, what is it?

DAVID

I don't know exactly how to tell you.

NAIDA

Is it so terrible, then?

DAVID

No, no, it isn't. It is something absurd. Just one of those things that really don't count. And yet they are so powerful, so deadly powerful.

[30]

NAIDA

Why, David, I haven't an idea of what you can mean.

DAVID

Naida, dear . . . Do you consider me a part of your very self? Am I that near to you? Are we really one?

NAIDA

(Earnestly.)

You know that!

DAVID

Yes. It is simply this . . . I should have told you before. Now that my people are coming you must know . . . We are Jews, Naida. I am a Jew.

(Naida draws away in silence. Her face is difficult to read. She seems stunned. David watches her anxiously.)

DAVID

Naida, it does make a difference. You do care!

NAIDA

(Slowly.)

No, David. No, it doesn't . . . It really doesn't make any difference.

DAVID

That is just like you. I knew you would be big and generous as always.

(Kissing her hand.)

Thank you.

NAIDA

But it is strange all the same. I can't help thinking of it. You don't seem like a Jew, David.

DAVID

(Bitterly.)

A Jew has a heart and a brain like any other man.

NAIDA

That is why you didn't tell me. You are ashamed of it then.

DAVID

Perhaps I am. Oh, I could forget . . . But I am never allowed to forget. Ever since I was a small boy I have had it thrust into my face, "Jew! Jew! Jew!" when I was trying with all my soul to be a *man*.

NAIDA

David, I want you to know that I don't feel that way at all, that to me it doesn't make a particle of difference what you are as long as you love me and I love you.

DAVID

Oh, how good you are!

NAIDA

You don't have to be grateful. It is I . . . I am the one to be grateful to you for even noticing me.

DAVID

I want to tell you, Naida . . . my best friends . . .

NAIDA

Yes, David, your friends . . . Are they Jewish, too?

DAVID

No. I have always avoided them.

NAIDA

You have avoided them!

DAVID

I know. I know. It is wrong of me. The whole feeling is wrong. It is narrow and mean and it goes on breeding narrowness and meanness. There is no ending to the hideousness of this feeling. Why, look, it has even made me lie to you!

NAIDA

Come now, don't let us talk about it any more. It is buried as far as we are concerned. There is the telephone ringing in our room.

DAVID

(Going right.)

They must be downstairs now. Shall I ask them to come up?

NAIDA

Yes. And I have forgotten to change my dress. Well, that would have been a petty thing to do, anyway.

DAVID

I forgot to tell you that my younger sister is coming, too.

NAIDA

Oh, your younger sister is coming, too. What is her name?

DAVID

Ruby. You will like her. She was a very sweet child, but lately she's been taking up art.

All right, send them up. *(Enters room again.)*

NAIDA

Was it they?

DAVID

Yes, they are coming right up.

(Going to her.)

Please don't be so serious about it. Meeting your husband's people is one of the things we have to go through with. Try to be more worldly.

NAIDA

That is exactly it.

[33]

DAVID

I don't know what you mean.

NAIDA

I think they're at the door.

DAVID

This must be they now. I hope you'll like Eva . . . that's my married sister.

(At the door—outside.)

Hello. Hello, mamma. Ruby . . . Eva . . . Come in . . . Come right in . . . Yes, she's here.

MRS. DAVIS *is very fat. She has dark brown eyes filled with fire. She is stubborn, violent in everything: sentimental, narrow minded, weak, generous and misunderstood by everyone. She speaks with quite a German accent.*

EVA *is quietly, correctly dressed, which completely expresses her, as she is quiet and correct.*

RUBY *is quite pretty and young even for sixteen.*

MRS. DAVIS

David, I suppose I should spank you. Ach, vat a surprise for us all. To go ant get yourself a vife! Vell, vere is she? Vere is de new Meeses Davis?

NAIDA

I am very glad to know you, Mrs. Davis.

MRS. DAVIS

Kiss me, my dear. You are my daughter now. Remember! She looks like Mrs. Silbermann, don't she, Eva, about de eyes?

DAVID

This is my married sister, Naida, Mrs. Goldschmidt.

NAIDA

I am glad to know you, Mrs. Goldsmith.

[34]

EVA

How do you do.

DAVID

And this is Ruby, the baby.

NAIDA

How do you do?

(Ruby giggles.)

MRS. DAVIS

You are younker dan I shoulth haff imagined. Davit is tirty-five. Aren't you, Davitt? You birt-day comes on de twenty-first of September. Yes, you vill be tirty-five. Tink of it! Ant now he iss married! Vere's a chair?

(Sits.)

Vat a pretty room. Ver nize. Say someting, Eva. Davitt, I must say you are very comfortably fixed here.

DAVID

Here's a more comfortable chair, mama. Sit here.

MRS. DAVIS

Di vill do. Ven I have vonce sat down I don't like to get up in a hurry. I have been having trouble mitt my legs, Davitt. Look at dem, all swollen out. De doctor don't seem to know vat de trouble is. It comes from my stomach, he tinks. He says I eat too much. But dat isn't so? Is it, Eva?

(Without giving her time to reply.)

Vat do you pay here?

DAVID

Oh, it isn't as expensive as it looks.

MRS. DAVIS

Very nize. Isn't it, Eva?

EVA

Very.

MRS. DAVIS

How long have you been here, Davitt?

[35]

DAVID

Just . . . how long is it, Naida? You would remember.

NAIDA

Oh, I don't know exactly. You get a very nice view from Fifth Avenue from the windows here.

MRS. DAVIS

I suppose you enchoy Fifth Avenue—like most young women? Vell, dat passes off . . . like udder tings. Davitt, I am tinkin' of giving up de city house. Too much egspense. Vat do we vant mitt a house in de country and von in de city? I don't enchoy de city at all. I am miserable de whole time. Noise, people, egspense, no sleep . . . And vat do you get? Notting. Simply notting. De opera vonce a week and a lot of strangers coming to dinner. Now in de country I have a fine beeg room to myself, I have peace ant quiet, plenty of servants and a goot furnace and, please Gott, some day I vill haff grantchildren to run around de olt place ant keep me company. What more? Isn't it so, Eva?

EVA

But you have grandchildren now, mamma.

MRS. DAVIS

I mean a great deal of grantchildren . . . hundreds of grantchildren. Isn't dat so, Davitt?

DAVID

Of course, of course, mama. How is auntie?

MRS. DAVIS

(*Shrugs.*)

Oh, she iss de same. Vat can you do? She always complains. She puts her interference into everyding as usual. She's vell. She hass a big appetite. Mrs. Solomon vas asking for you de udder day, Davitt. Vasn't she, Eva?

EVA

Oh yes. She always admired you so much, David.

[36]

DAVID

That is very kind of her.

(*To Naida.*)

An old neighbor of ours in the country.

MRS. DAVIS

Very rich people. Very old Jewish family. But we are forgetting de bride. Naida . . . Iss dat your real name? Naida! I never heard Naida before. Vat does it mean? Anything? Iss it a Russian name or an English name? Vat kind of a name iss it?

NAIDA

It is a stage name.

MRS. DAVIS

A stage name!

(*Shocked.*)

Are you on de stage, den?

NAIDA

I was studying for the operatic stage.

MRS. DAVIS

(*To Eva.*)

She vass studying for de operatic stage.

So! Tink of dat den! Vat iss your real name, den, if it isn't Naida?

NAIDA

My real name is Ada.

MRS. DAVIS

So! Your real name is Ada. And vat made you change your name? Vasn't Ada goot enough for you?

NAIDA

My name was plain Ada Jones. I know no one would ever pay to hear plain Ada Jones sing, so I simply added an i and an n and made it Naida.

[37]

DAVID

But, dear, I didn't know that your name was Ada.

NAIDA

We never talked about it, David.

MRS. DAVIS

You never talked about vedder her name was Ada or Naida!

(To Naida.)

Vell, Ada, your name vas Jones. So you aren't a Jewish girl, are you?

NAIDA

No, Mrs. Davis. And every one calls me Naida now.

MRS. DAVIS

(Stops to think, then turns to David.)

So. Vell!

Davitt, ve read de article about you in de Sunday pabers. Ve vere all so proud, of course. Papa vass pleased to dett. Poor papa, he's been feeling sick. His kidneys trouble him. Don't you ever tink of poor papa, Davitt? He's always tinking about you. Ven iss Davitt coming home? Vy doesn't Davitt come to see me? Isn't dat so, Eva?

EVA

Papa feels very badly that you don't come to see us all and bring . . . Naida.

DAVID

I don't see why he should feel hurt at my not coming. I have been home so little in the past year ortwo. I have always had my own place in town in the winter.

MRS. DAVIS

You young people never tink of family ties. I suppose your mudder is living, Ada?

NAIDA

No, my mother died when I was a baby.

[38]

MRS. DAVIS

Vas your mudder an American?

NAIDA

No.

MRS. DAVIS

Vat was she?

NAIDA

My mother was French.

MRS. DAVIS

So. To tink of Davitt's marrying a French girl.

DAVID

Naida, you never told me your mother was French.

NAIDA

You never asked me, David.

MRS. DAVIS

Vell! Iss your father living den?

NAIDA

No. My father died when I was young.

MRS. DAVIS

Who brought you up den? Somebotty must have brought you up.

NAIDA

An American woman from the South. She brought me from England when I was still a child. You see my father was part Irish—but we always lived in England.

MRS. DAVIS

His mudder vass Irish den?

NAIDA

Oh, no. His mother was Italian.

[39]

MRS. DAVIS

French, English, Irish, Italian . . . Gott, Davitt, it seems to me your wife is everything but Jewish.

DAVID

(Laughing.)

What difference does that make? We are all Americans now.

MRS. DAVIS

Of course. Vy not? I am not old fashioned. Vell, how long are you two expecting to stay here? Oh, a hotel iss alright for honeymoons, but honeymoons don't last forever. Life is not all tea and silk cushions. Ach, don't I know dat? I had a honeymoon, too. I haff not forgotten. Your fadder has tonsilitis. I could not get near him for weeks.

(Turning impatiently to Eva.)

Vy don't you say someding?

RUBY

Don't you think we had better be going, mama?

NAIDA

(To Ruby.)

David tells me you are studying art. Do you like it?

RUBY

Oh, yes, very much.

MRS. DAVIS

She makes very nize little trawings. Although I don't approve of de nude. It teaches young beople immodesty. De body is meant to be useful not ornamental. Vy are ve so ugly?

DAVID

Are we ugly? Surely not all . . .

(Ruby giggles.)

[40]

MRS. DAVIS

Ruby! De art school is taking all her sensibilities away. Trawings from de nude, Greek dancing . . . is dere notting left for brivate life? Vell, we must go. But not before you bromise to come out to Roselands for dinner. Vy not plan to spend de whole summer mitt us? Dat's an idea. Papa would be in Heaven. You can haff a whole ving to yourselves. You can safe money, Davitt. And dere's de laboratory. Somebotty asked me de udder day . . . Vy haff you got dat shed dere . . . to keep elephants in? Ant I said, no, dat iss for my bug hunter. He hunts bugs in dere and sticks pins into guinea pigs to make dem squeal. Vell, vell. I won't make fun. I know dat you are a very great scientist. Gott, vere would de voild be mittout science? Isn't it so, Ada?

NAIDA

Oh, yes, I think David's work is very important.

MRS. DAVIS

Dat's right. Dat's right. I am glad to hear it. I suppose you are very fond of cooking little tings? Davitt used to be very fond of my strudel and hasenpfheffer.

NAIDA

I really have had very little practice in cooking, Mrs. Davis.

MRS. DAVIS

Like every mottern girl. Take Ruby, now. She can cook. But does she?

(Seeing the table with the cocktail glass.)

You drink cocktails in de afternoon?

(as Naida is about to speak)

Nevermint. I am not old fashioned. Vell, goot pye, Davitt. Don't forget your bromise to come out to Rose-lands on Sunday. Ve shall egspect you. Papa can't vait to see Ada.

NAIDA

But my name is Naida.

MRS. DAVIS

No, I can never remember to add an i and an n. Ada
iss goot enough for me. Goot pye, my dear.

(Shakes hands with Naida.)

I am sure you are going to make my poy a very goot vife.
After all, dat is vat matters, isn't it? Come, Ruby. Vy
can't you say someting?

RUBY

(reaching out her hand)

Good bye, Naida.

NAIDA

Good bye, Ruby.

EVA

Good bye, Naida.

NAIDA

Good bye, Mrs. Goldsmith.

MRS. DAVIS

Schmidt! Goldschmidt!

DAVID

(kissing her)

Good bye, mama.

MRS. DAVIS

(Affectionately.)

Goot pye, my son. It gives me a treat to see you again.
You never tink of your poor old mama, do you? And you're
all I haff, since Eddie died. It vass his birttday yesterday.
Did you go out to de grave?

DAVID

No, mama, I . . .

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MRS. DAVIS

You see! Dat iss vat love iss. Forget everyting! So! Vell, goot pye. I forgive everyting. Be happy. No, don't bodder to go out mitt us. Go to Ada.

(They all go out.)

DAVID

(Who goes out with them, nevertheless—returning.)

Poor old mama!

(Laughs.)

Isn't she funny?

NAIDA

Oh, quite.

DAVID

She gets so much excitement out of life. She's always like that. She has the biggest heart in the world, too. Generous . . . she'd give anything away. Little Ruby has grown, too. Quite a young lady. I haven't seen her since she came back from boarding school. She's just at the silly age, isn't she?

NAIDA

She seems rather silly, yes.

DAVID

You'll like Eva when you get to know her. She has a very strong character. She really rules mama. That is why she gives in to her in everything. She has three wonderful children. Didn't you like her?

NAIDA

Oh, very much.

DAVID

I am glad. I thought you would. Shall we go out there Sunday.

NAIDA

Do you want to go, David?

[43]

DAVID

I think we should. Yes, I would enjoy it in a way. After all, your own people do mean a great deal to you. And you would want to see the place . . . It's a fine old place . . . And my old room I used to have . . . and the laboratory . . . and auntie . . . Auntie would be terribly hurt if we didn't go.

NAIDA

You have decided to go, then?

DAVID

Not unless you want to, dear. You don't want to go, do you?

NAIDA

(Quickly.)

Yes, yes, of course. Why not?

DAVID

(Thinking pleasantly of his family affection, not noticing that Naida is sitting staring ahead of her, trying to control her feelings.)

You'll see then how funny mama really is. We all laugh at her. You should see her in one of her tirades. She storms around in a perfect whirlwind, sputters in German, berates everyone . . . then Eva comes along . . .

(Seeing Naida's face.)

Why, what is the matter?

(Naida jumps up. She seems about to speak, then strides across the room and into the bedroom, banging the door and locking it.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: Room at Roselands. Large arched door at left, back. This leads to a terrace which leads in turn to a

garden below. Another arched door at right back. Small arched door at left, back. This leads to the front of the house. Terra cotta fireplace at right well forward. The walls are hung with tapestry. The furniture is, for the most part, Italian. A couch well forward right. About this are grouped several comfortable chairs. A small table to the left of the couch holds a lamp and books. Behind the couch a long table with two lamps. A large modern American chair is placed conspicuously forward. At left there is an old carved walnut chest. A small table of odd shape holds several marble figures and a box of painted wood. At right, well forward, against the wall, there is a small pulpit from a church. It is a beautiful September evening after dinner. JACOB DAVIS, a small, grizzled, old Jew, of the gentle, almost effeminate type, is enjoying his after-dinner coffee and cigar in the company of his sister, who sits on the couch knitting. She is an erect little creature with the body and face of a child, for all her sixty-five years. She is always called AUNTIE in the family.

JACOB

Its just like we sit in de olt country, isn't it, Christianne? You pizzy at some tammed knitting and I bretending to read de baper. Only look at de room. Whoever would have tought of such a room in de olt country?

AUNTIE

(Counting her stitches.)

Von, too, tree, four, fif . . . It iss nize sitting like dis mitt you, Jacob. Since my brudder's become such a great man he never hass time for his poor olt sister Christianne.

JACOB

Don't talk such foolishness.

AUNTIE

Such bright nights. I cannot sleep. I jump up. I lie

down. Always de moon. I tink of udder times.
(*Sighs.*)

Batt to grow old. Nopotty cares. Always de young beople. Day hate you, and day are always so kind. Auntie dis, Auntie dat! *Dear Auntie!* Ant day vish I vass deatt alreatty.

(*Sighs.*)

Put I can't complain.

JACOB

Den vy do you?

AUNTIE

Vere are my glasses?

JACOB

(*Hunting for them.*)

Now you haff lost your glasses again.

(*He looks for the glasses.*)

Vat's dat—pinned on your vaist?

AUNTIE

My glasses!

(*She puts them on.*)

Lena vill never haff any light in de house. It's stylish not to see vat you are doing. Put I can't complain.

JACOB

How iss your heart?

AUNTIE

My heart? Last week ven you were gone away—den I had a batt attach. Very batt. Since den . . . Vell, I am alive, I subbose. It von't pe long, dough, before I . . .

JACOB

Vat a vay to talk now! Vy you haff a long time to live yet. Don't your olt brudder take goot care of you—vat, Christianne?

AUNTIE

Lena don't care vat pecomes of me. She iss always so pizzy. I am not allowed to do a ting in de house. I am treated like an olt piece of rubbish. If I am in de liprary, den it's de liprary must pe cleaned. If I am sitting in de borch—den it's de borch. Ant I am never allowed to help any more. Vy dey don't even allow me in de kitchen. And a French cook! Whoever heard of a French cook, Jacob!

JACOB

Oh, vell, Lena don't mean anything.

AUNTIE

Such noodles! Like leader! Like leader!

EVA

(Enters.)

Well, papa, you two old cronies gossiping after dinner? Where's Herman?

AUNTIE

Efa, who's dis Doctor Mackenzie who vass here for dinner?

EVA

He is David's chief at the laboratory. David met him at the golf club today and brought him to dinner, Auntie.

AUNTIE

I don't like him.

EVA

Papa, have you seen Herman?

JACOB

No, darling. Vy must you always pe looking for dat goot for notting husband of yours? Heah?

EVA

Because Barbara has a stomach ache and she must have some castor oil.

JACOB

Castor oil Vat hass Herman to do mitt castor oil?

EVA

He always gives it to her. I wonder where they went.

JACOB

Oh, I see, a sentimental reason. Dat's right.

JACOB

I heard mama say someting about David's animal house over dere.

EVA

Oh, of course. They've gone over to David's laboratory. Will you tell Herman to come right up, papa?

JACOB

Vy don't you go ant get him, Eva?

EVA

Oh, no. If I do they will make me come back and play bridge. You know mama can't sleep unless she has her game of bridge. No one realizes how serious a matter it is to bring up children.

(She goes out, left.)

JACOB

(Rising.)

I vill go ant get him myself. It's a shame, to go away ven de papy needs castor oil.

(He goes out, right.)

AUNTIE sits knitting. When DOCTOR MACKENZIE and DOCTOR HOTCHKISS enter, she rises stiffly, going out right. MACKENZIE is a handsome man. He is not tall, but well built and strong. He is of the type we call American—strong jaw, small nose, small brilliant eyes, smooth face, and clear ruddy complexion. HOTCHKISS is tall and angular. He wears glasses. His nose is a little pink from bad digestion. He is in evening dress. MACKENZIE wears a tweed golf suit which is very becoming. They are both smoking.

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MACKENZIE

(Looking about.)

Not a bad room. Not bad at all. House isn't bad. I'm quite surprised. Of course they may have overstepped themselves here and there . . .

HOTCHKISS

I wonder why it is that most of us feel ourselves superior to the Jew—and especially if he is rich.

MACKENZIE

Well, *aren't* we?

HOTCHKISS

(Ignoring the question—examining a chair.)

This is an original. Very rare—with that splat.

MACKENZIE

And do you know, it's the Jew himself who makes us feel that way? Even the best Jew is conscious of being one. And that is exactly where he trips himself up. He's always making excuses for himself . . . or defending himself.

HOTCHKISS

I don't see how anyone could feel himself superior to Davis—I mean, the Doctor.

MACKENZIE

Davis? As a scientist . . . Well, in the last few years Davis has surpassed himself. He is not a brilliant, forceful man but he is the kind who works underground for precious metal. Sometimes, do you know, I am almost jealous of him?

It's a funny thing, though . . . When Davis and I are side by side—say we walk out together—I mean just the physical thing . . . Davis's blood is always seeming to make excuses for itself. I can feel my personality take hold of him. Oh, there are such things! He envies me because I am not of a race of martyrs. He recognizes me as a superior animal.

HOTCHKISS

That is simply physical magnetism. You exercise that over many people.

MACKENZIE

My dear Hotchkiss, Davis is not a woman.

HOTCHKISS

(Laughs.)

You haven't changed, Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE

(Looking about—sees the pulpit.)

What in the name of common sense is that?

HOTCHKISS

It's an old pulpit . . .

(Going to it.)

MACKENZIE

What is it doing here?

(They examine it together.)

Here's an auction number. It's the old man's latest prize.

(Laughs.)

He's bought the pulpit from an Italian church.

HOTCHKISS

Fine one, too. I should say it was about fourteenth century.

(Examines it fondly.)

MACKENZIE

To think, Hotchkiss, that a man of God has tread these stairs, his head buzzing with platitudes . . . and now it belongs to our old diamond merchant who bought it at an auction . . .

HOTCHKISS

And paid the price of the church for it, I warrant.

[50]

MACKENZIE

Do you suppose it really means anything to him?

HOTCHKISS

You can't tell.

MACKENZIE

Look at the mantle, if you please. Copied from the Davenzatti Palace. And before it—lo—a chair from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

HOTCHKISS

He probably likes it because it's comfortable. He has worked for his rest, why not?

MACKENZIE

He needn't go to sleep in the drawing room even if he is rich. The tapestries are fakes, and so are the hanging lamps. What do you think of Davis's wife?

HOTCHKISS

She seems very nice.

MACKENZIE

She's a very pretty woman. I thought her gown very attractive, didn't you?

HOTCHKISS

I don't know as I really noticed it.

MACKENZIE

My dear Hotchkiss, you are simply a biological specimen.
(*Picks up a book of poetry—an edition of Mercure de France.*)

Poems—French . . . Someone has been scribbling on it in French. By the way, their cook is a poet himself. I never tasted such patties.

HOTCHKISS

Perhaps the poems are his.

[51]

MACKENZIE

Perhaps. Have you heard her sing?

HOTCHKISS

Just a minute tonight—from her own room.

MACKENZIE

How was it?

HOTCHKISS

Nice voice, I thought.

MACKENZIE

Not bad?

HOTCHKISS

No. Not bad at all. On the contrary.

MACKENZIE

I can't say how relieved I am. There's nothing worse than a woman who can't sing—unless it's one who can. By the way, Hotchkiss, do me a favor, will you?

HOTCHKISS

Well, doctor?

MACKENZIE

Ask her to sing—off hand, you know.

The others come in from the garden. MRS. DAVIS, MR. DAVIS, DAVID, HERMAN GOLDSCHMIDT, NAIDA. HERMAN is the pompous, uncuuous type of Jew. He affects an English accent. He likes to talk above other people's heads—and his own. All are in evening dress. NAIDA'S dress is expensive and very low.

MRS. DAVIS is heard off stage scolding JACOB.

MRS. DAVIS

Don't take it off now. Keep it on until you get in de house. Such a papy! You'll catch your deatt out here in de damp, don't you know dat?

[52]

JACOB

(*Protesting.*)

I am alright. I am not a papy.

MRS. DAVIS

Didn't I hear you sneeze? You can't fool me. Running out in de night air mittout a hat. Whoever heard of such foolishness!

JACOB enters, wearing MRS. DAVIS' fur stole, which she keeps tied about his head, in spite of his protests and efforts to escape. As they enter he sneezes.

MRS. DAVIS

Dere! Vat did I tell you? Look at him! Wouldn't you tink he vass olt enough alretty to take care of himself? Valking out in de garden in dancing shoes. Whoever heard . . .

MACKENZIE

We have found where the cook keeps his poetry—here . . .

MRS. DAVIS

(*Exploding.*)

De cook! How can he dare? Vat does de cook haff to do in de trawing room? Jacob, do you hear? De cook hass left hiss book in here! Yellow French boetry. Gott, dis iss too much!

NAIDA

Don't be absurd, Mrs. Davis. This is my book. I left it in here.

MRS. DAVIS

You! Den . . . Ach, I see! It's chust anudder of your chokes, Doctor Mackenzie. You are a great choker, but please don't give me such shocks. He's independent enough, de cook. De udder day he tried to make me eat poisoned mushrooms.

HOTCHKISS

Poisoned mushrooms! I have made a study of poisoned mushrooms.

(Herman enters from right.)

MRS. DAVIS

Don't be scientific! I vill not be legured to. Goethe himself could not make me eat poisoned mushrooms.

HERMAN

But Goethe is dead, mama.

MRS. DAVIS

Don't I know dat? But what has dat to do mitt toad stools?

EVA

(Entering.)

Herman, where have you been? I never knew you to run off that way when Barbara is sick.

HERMAN

I am sorry, dear, but how was I to know she was sick?

EVA

Well, you might have guessed it. One of them always is.

MRS. DAVIS

I tolt you so!

HERMAN

What is wrong with her now, Eva?

EVA

She has temperature, and her stomach . . .

MRS. DAVIS

Her stomach . . . I knew it. She doesn't get enough to eat. Dats de whole trouble. De chilt is half starved.

(To Mackenzie.)

Vy you shoul't half seen her, Doctor, last summer ven I had her. She vas as fat as a little angel, vasn't she, fadder?

EVA

That's just when her stomach got upset, mama.

[54]

MRS. DAVIS

You mean to say *I* upset her stomach! I upset my own granddaughter's stomach! Oh, Efa, how can you stant dere and say such a ting!

HERMAN

How many times have I told you, mama, that Eva and I have a special routine for our children and that if anyone else steps in . . .

MRS. DAVIS

(Indignant.)

Step in! Step in! Any von else! I am not any von else! I am her grantmudder. I tink if any von has a right to spoil her stomach I haff.

MACKENZIE

Assuredly, Mrs. Davis.

JACOB

Vell, vy don't you do someding? Haven't ve trained nurses? Vat are all dose starched ghosts sitting around for, anyway? Vy don't day pe useful? Vy don't somebody giff Barbara some castor oil?

EVA

Because Herman always gives it to the children, and Herman was out in the laboratory explaining science to Naida.

NAIDA

(Smiling.)

So that's what it was.

HERMAN

I'll come right away, dear. I didn't dream Baby was sick. I'm awfully sorry, you know.

DAVID

I'll go up with you, Herman. Perhaps there is something I can do.

(Herman, Eva, David go out.)

[55]

MRS. DAVIS

I spoil her stomach!

Isn't dat an awful vay to talk to me? As if I . . . Vell, I vill not go near her now. Dey can nurse her demselves.

Vat iss wrong mitt mottern barents, Doctor Mackenzie? Dey tink dey know everyding about dere children. You can't teach dem anything. I go into de nursery and dere are tree nurses sitting around like it vas a funeral. I hear my grantchild screaming. Nopotty goes to it. I say—Vere iss your heart? A papy iss crying! And dey say—Shh! Let it! And den ven I go to my grantchild dey all take hold of me ant drag me away, as if I vass a devil. Vy iss dat? Nature! Dey are always talking about Nature. I am sure in de olt country ve never vorried about Nature but our children grew up to be strong ant healtty.

MACKENZIE

Your daughter and her husband believe in practicing modern ideas of discipline.

MRS. DAVIS

Mottern! Mottern! I hate vat iss mottern. It chust means doing some funny ting because nopotty ever heard of doing it before. Ada, you are smoking a cigarette? Look, papa, Ada iss smoking a cigarette.

HOTCHKISS

(To Mr. Davis.)

I am very interested in your antique, Mr. Davis. That pulpit is extremely interesting. What do you intend doing with it?

JACOB

I don't know. Do you like it? My tealer bitt for it by mistake. But of course ven all de bapers brinted dat I had bought it I vass ashamed to send it back. It's bretty. I can put it in de music room beside de organ.

MACKENZIE

Oh, no. Some day you must build a room around it.

JACOB

Build a room around a pulpit! I never heard of such a ting!

MRS. DAVIS

Doctor Mackenzie is chust making fun of you, Jacob. He ~~is~~ always making fun.

MACKENZIE

On the contrary. I would enjoy seeing your print collection, Mr. Davis. I hear you have some valuable etchings.

MRS. DAVIS

(To Naida as Mr. Davis and Mackenzie and Hotchkiss talk.)

Ada!

(Motions about the cut of Naida's dress.)

NAIDA

I don't know what you mean, Mrs. Davis.

MRS. DAVIS

Your tress, Naida. Vy all de men are looking at you.

NAIDA

(Out of patience—moving away—to Hotchkiss.)

Wouldn't you like to look at my father-in-law's etchings?
. . . they're in the next room.

HOTCHKISS

I should enjoy seeing them very much, of course. Has he any Whistlers?

(They go out talking.)

MRS. DAVIS

Do you blay auction, Doctor Mackenzie?

MACKENZIE

No.

MRS. DAVIS

Well, Jacob, I subbose we might as vell go to bett den?

JACOB

Yes. I must be up early in de morning. Doctor Mackenzie, I hope you vill excuse me.

Good night, mama.

(Kisses her—goes out left.)

MRS. DAVIS

(In a voice full of emotion.)

Doctor Mackenzie, ven iss my poy to get his appointment?

MACKENZIE

Well, Mrs. Davis, of course . . .

MRS. DAVIS

Don't start in to make egscuses.

MACKENZIE

There are many considerations. You must know that, my dear lady. You must understand also that I am not the voice of the whole university. I am merely a member of the board of judges. He is a very able man, of course . . .

MRS. DAVIS

(Passionately.)

Put he iss a Jew!

MACKENZIE

My dear Mrs. Davis!

MRS. DAVIS

Ach, gott! My dear Mrs. Davis! I know vat I see, vat I hear! I haff ears. Davitt . . . Davitt knows notting dat goes on. You can insult him to his face ant he vill smile. He hass his toughts—I don't know vere. He iss always treaming. But me—I don't tream. Vy dit dey appoint Doctor Reilly last year instead of Davitt, ven everybotty—even de newspapers saitt dat Davitt vass de man for de blace?

MACKENZIE

Reilly was an older man. He had long been associated with the work of the department. It was only natural and right that he should receive the promotion to a higher place.

MRS. DAVIS

Dat he could not full ven he got it. He vass so stupid dat even before his illness Davitt vass doing haff his vork and his own vork pesides.

MACKENZIE

Who told you this?

MRS. DAVIS

Not Davitt, you may be sure. He never complains. He iss proud. Put he vants his appointment chust de same. Ant he shoul't get it. Dere iss von man who stands in de way. De most powerful man at de university.

MACKENZIE

Who?

MRS. DAVIS

I mean Doctor Albert Mackenzie.

DAVID

(Entering.)

What is mama saying now? Are you scolding Doctor Mackenzie again?

MACKENZIE

Very severely. How is the patient?

MRS. DAVIS

Vat vass wrong? Anything serious, Davitt?

DAVID

She is alright now. Nothing serious. She simply swallowed a moth ball.

MRS. DAVIS

A mott ball! Who gave her a mott ball to swallow?
Pless her little heart. I am going up to her now.

(With dignity—to Mackenzie.)

Vill you egscuse me, Doctor Mackenzie?

(Kissing David.)

I am going up now. Goot night, son.

DAVID

Good night, mama. Where is Naida?

MRS. DAVIS

She vent into de liprary mitt Doctor Hotchkiss to look
at papa's pictures. Speak to her about her tress, Davitt.
It's a disgrace. I do not like to criticise—put it's disgraceful
Vy she looks like an opera singer.

(She goes out right.)

(Hotchkiss and Naida enter.)

HOTCHKISS

Oh, Mackenzie. You can't afford to miss these Haydens.
And there's a Whistler you'll want to steal.

MACKENZIE

Whistlers, has he? Are there any Duers?

(To Naida.)

I hope you're not going to desert us, Mrs. Davis?

NAIDA

No, of course not.

(Mackenzie and Hotchkiss go out.)

DAVID

You look tired tonight, dear.

NAIDA

Do I? I'm sorry. I was hoping I looked very nice.

DAVID

You do, of course. You always look beautiful.

[60]

NAIDA

Don't I look especially beautiful?

DAVID

I suppose you do.

NAIDA

(*Laughing.*)

You *suppose*. Oh, David!

DAVID

Is that the gown you bought the other day?

NAIDA

Yes, don't you like it? Of course it's a little elaborate for these small family dinners. Why do we never have anything but small family dinners, David?

DAVID

We really have very few friends, as I have told you. And, of course, for our relatives . . .

NAIDA

(*Sighing.*)

Oh, of course, for our relatives . . .

DAVID

Naida, don't you think that dress a little too . . . I don't want to offend you.

NAIDA

You don't want to offend me, and yet you suggest that my dress is a little too . . . Too what? Let me hear, David, what you mean?

DAVID

Oh, nothing, only . . . I thought, perhaps . . . The neck, you know. Don't you think it's . . . It exposes a good deal?

NAIDA

I see. I'm indecently dressed.

[61]

DAVID

I didn't say that, Naida. I suppose it's alright. It's very charming, and you look beautiful in it. But—for a different atmosphere. I'm not narrow minded, you know that. But here—when it is, as you say, just a small family dinner . . .

(Laughing.)

You shouldn't look like an opera singer.

NAIDA

(Laughing—and hurt.)

An opera singer! Oh, how absurd!

(Starts right.)

DAVID

No, don't go. Please stay and talk with me. I don't mean to hurt you, dear. Try to understand. I haven't had a minute to talk with you for the past month. You're always so busy with something—sketching and singing lessons . . .

NAIDA

Of course you haven't had a minute with me. You simply appear at meals—the rest of the time you are locked up in your laboratory. And at night you are tired. When do you expect to see me?

DAVID

I am not locked up. You know that you can come in any time you wish, Naida.

NAIDA

Yes, and when I do go over there you are always pre-occupied and annoyed. If I begin to ask questions you send me over to look at the white rats. Now run away like a good little girl and play with the pretty little white rats. You never give me credit for wanting to know something about your work and the things which occupy your mind. Since *I* don't occupy it, at least I have the right to know something about what *does*.

DAVID

You *do* occupy my mind.

NAIDA

I *did*.

DAVID

You don't understand me, that is all.

NAIDA

And do you understand me?

DAVID

Yes, of course—perfectly.

NAIDA

No, you don't. Because if you did you would know what hell I have been through in the last months—five months in this house!

DAVID

What do you say, Naida? You're not content here? Why I never . . .

NAIDA

No, you never dreamed it. That shows how occupied you have been with me. You never noticed a thing.

DAVID

Of course I have seen some things. I know that mama is rather trying.

NAIDA

Trying!

DAVID

But I even thought that you were beginning to get around her. You have a way of winning people, Naida.

NAIDA

Thank you, David.

[63]

DAVID

And you have been so interested in your singing lessons. You were so glad to have free time to work in, you said. I thought you were happy. You and Ruby have been good friends.

NAIDA

Because she is young. I must have youth about me. Oh, you haven't seen a thing. I am starving in this house. I hate families. I always told you that. I loathe those children and the castor oil bottle and that gluey marriage of Herman's and Eva's and Herman's flirting with me every time we are alone together.

DAVID

Herman flirting with you? I never dreamed of such a thing.

NAIDA

Oh, that isn't so bad. I really don't mind enough, I suppose. And there's the rest . . .

DAVID

What do you mean by—the rest?

NAIDA

Your mother and father and—auntie.

DAVID

But they mean so much to me, Naida. I can't see why they don't . . .

NAIDA

Why they don't mean so much to me, too? Perhaps when one gets old . . . But I'm not old enough. Oh, David, if you had ever known what it is to be young.

DAVID

Then you're not happy here?

[64]

NAIDA

I am simply stifling. Oh, I can't explain . . . The whole thing was such a mistake. I was never meant to marry. I was meant to go along as I was then, to sing and fly around with crazy fools like myself. We had such glorious times, David, being so utterly ridiculous. You can't understand that, David. You are never happy unless you are solving some deep problem of the universe. You always say I am a child. I am a child. I can't help it. I like those garrish hotels you hate so. I like bright clothes. I like gay people. I need and want everything you shun and disapprove of. What can we do? Here we are married and living a sedate life together!

DAVID

Naida!

NAIDA

I've thought and thought. You can't help it. I can't help it. No one can. I suppose I will simply have to go on as I have been . . .

DAVID

What do you mean by that?

NAIDA

(With a great sigh.)

Stifling.

DAVID

Don't you think, Naida, in time . . . ?

NAIDA

In time, in time . . . Of course, I will get old. Give me time and I will get old. If I could only be like Eva. If I could only congeal as she has! Castor oil and string quartets—that is all Eva thinks of from one year's end to the other.

DAVID

Naida!

NAIDA

Oh, don't let us talk like this any more. It doesn't do any good. But please don't say that you understand.

DAVID

Why . . .

NAIDA

Oh, it's—it's just everything. I am going in to them now.

DAVID

(Getting her scarf which lies across the back of the couch.)

Wait, dear . . . Here is your scarf . . . don't you think you had better put it about your shoulders?

(He throws the scarf about her shoulders.)

NAIDA

(Furious at the idea that he wishes to hide her shoulders.)

You Jew!

(She throws the scarf on the floor and goes out right.)

(David stands stunned and hurt. He is about to go out left when Mackenzie and Hotchkiss enter.)

MACKENZIE

I see your father has a duplicate. A lithograph of Whistlers. I've been looking years for it. Do you suppose he'd trade it?

DAVID

I don't know, I am sure, how my father would feel about it. You will have to ask him tomorrow. I hope you will excuse me tonight, Mackenzie. There is some unfinished work . . . at the laboratory . . . You know how it is . . .

MACKENZIE

It's quite alright, Doctor, of course.

[66]

DAVID

If they ask about me, Hotchkiss, I'm alright. I've often done it before, I have everything I need. I hope you don't think us rude . . . Well . . .

MACKENZIE

Good night, Davis. Awfully good of you to have us.

(David goes out back.)

(Seeing Naida's scarf on the floor—puts it back on the couch.)

You didn't ask her to sing. You promised me you would.

HOTCHKISS

Why didn't you ask her yourself.

MACKENZIE

I was afraid she might think I was interested. Women are so conceited.

HOTCHKISS

Well, you *are* interested.

MACKENZIE

If I weren't do you think I would mind her thinking so?

HOTCHKISS

(Laughing.)

Still the Don Juan, Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE

Oh, no. I simply understand women.

HOTCHKISS

(After a pause.)

I suppose you have never realized, Mackenzie, that working under Davis for three years I have come to admire him—to—well—to love him?

MACKENZIE

I am sure I have no objection to your loving him.

[67]

HOTCHKISS

I dislike to hear you speak of him slightly. He is a great man—not only as a scientist—but in every way.

MACKENZIE

I rather thought that you admired me somewhat.

HOTCHKISS

You were one of my young heroes. I remember when you first came to the University. You impressed me enormously. You were so picturesque. You were my ideal of a great man. Your cruelty appealed to me—as it appeals to all unformed young minds.

MACKENZIE

Thank you, my dear Doctor.

HOTCHKISS

(After a pause.)

Mackenzie, I don't want you to use your influence with the board to get me placed in a position which should go to Davis. If I get it, I am going to decline.

MACKENZIE

You won't throw away a chance like that when you once have it: I know men too well.

HOTCHKISS

That is just where men like you fail, Mackenzie. You can control affairs as long as you are counting upon the ambitions of other men—but you never take into account their ideals.

MACKENZIE

(Shrugging.)

Have it your own way. There are others who will go in your place.

HOTCHKISS

(At right.)

Coming up?

MACKENZIE

Shortly. I'm going to smoke a cigarette.

HOTCHKISS

(Laughing.)

Good night.

(He goes out right.)

MACKENZIE

Good night.

(There is a silence. A maid comes in at left.)

MAID

Oh, excuse me, sir.

MACKENZIE

It's alright. What do you want?

MAID

I came to close up, sir. I thought everybody had gone up.

MACKENZIE

So they have. I will be going up in a minute.

MAID

Shall I wait, sir?

MACKENZIE

No, you needn't wait. I just want to finish my cigarette.

(Meaning to flatter.)

Mrs. Davis keeps very pretty maids.

MAID

(Meekly.)

Yes, sir.

MACKENZIE

What do you do on a moon light night like this?

MAID

I sleep, sir. I have been up since six.

[69]

MACKENZIE

What a waste!

MAID

I beg pardon, sir?

MACKENZIE

Do you never dream?

MAID

(Earnestly.)

Oh, yes, sir.

MACKENZIE

Tell me what you dream.

MAID

Last night I dreamed of my father. We have a pretty little cottage at home, sir. I dreamed that it burned down and my father in it.

MACKENZIE

(Bored.)

What a pity! Well, you'd better go to bed now.

MAID

Shall I close the window, sir?

MACKENZIE

I will close it when I go up.

MAID

(Going left.)

Yes, sir. Good night, sir.

(Naida enters after a minute. She comes in hesitatingly.)

NAIDA

(Seeing Mackenzie.)

Oh! I thought everyone had gone up.

MACKENZIE

I am always the last up. I never enjoy a house until I feel I am alone in it.

[70]

NAIDA

Yes, I can understand that feeling. I came for my book.
The chef's book, as you called it.

(She goes to table for book.)

MACKENZIE

(Getting the book for her, opens it.)

So you read French poetry, do you?

NAIDA

I always spoke French when I was younger. I was born in France.

MACKENZIE

Really? Were you? That was very wise of you.

NAIDA

Please let me have my book now, Doctor Mackenzie. I am going upstairs now.

MACKENZIE

Ah, markings in pencil. All your favorites . . . Verlaine, de Regnier, Paul Fort . . . Ah, here is your especial favorite . . .

NAIDA

(Annoyed.)

Please, Doctor Mackenzie . . .

MACKENZIE

(Reading.)

Par les nuits d'été bleues où chantent les cigales, Dieu verse sur la France une coupe d'étoiles. Le vent porte à ma lèvre un goût du ciel d'été! Je veux boire . . .

NAIDA

I hate to have things read out loud.

[71]

MACKENZIE

So do I. Stay a moment. You can't be sleepy. You've been up there on that balcony of your looking at the moon.

NAIDA

How did you know?

MACKENZIE

How could you do anything else? You see I see everything. I see many things which you think are disguised from everyone.

NAIDA

Oh, I have nothing to conceal.

MACKENZIE

Have a cigarette with me.

(He offers his cigarette case. Naida takes a cigarette.)

NAIDA

Well, for a few minutes . . . How warm it is in the rooms up stairs!

(She sits on the couch.)

MACKENZIE

(Standing near her.)

Do you remember de Maupassant's moon story? Only old people and fools, he says, are insensible to the lure of the moon. And, do you know. I think that you are neither one nor the other.

NAIDA

I am not so sure about the fool part of it.

MACKENZIE

Oh well . . . You wanted to be a great singer, didn't you?

NAIDA

Who told you . . . ?

[72]

MACKENZIE

Never mind. Well, then, why did you get married? You see that is where women are so unreasonable. They don't sit down calmly and think—if I let myself be married then I will have to go with this man or that and settle down and go his way instead of my own. They allow their emotions to run away with them, and then one fine day they discover that they have nothing left but their emotions—which have probably cooled considerably by this time.

NAIDA

There are women who are successful both as artists and as wives and mothers. Why I know . . .

MACKENZIE

Yes, and art suffers for it every time. A woman can't act with one half of her mind on her role and the other half on the nursery . . .

NAIDA

I suppose that is true. What are we to do?

MACKENZIE

It is tragic business being a woman.

NAIDA

Tragic?

MACKENZIE

I have known a great many women. I have never known one who was not enmeshed in hopeless complications. Yes, one. My sister. She is enormously intelligent. She is as unfeeling as if she had been under chloroform her whole life long. She does a great deal of good, of course. You would scarcely call her a human being.

NAIDA

It is hard to stifle one's emotions—and then if you don't . . .

MACKENZIE

That is woman's whole problem. She never knows when to feel and when not to. Look at yourself . . .

NAIDA

Oh, please don't talk about me!

MACKENZIE

I knew from the first minute that I saw you that you were unhappy.

NAIDA

Then you were wrong. I am not unhappy. I am simply . . . It's stupid, I suppose. My husband has changed so.
(*Laughing.*)

MACKENZIE

You love him then?

NAIDA

I—I don't know.

MACKENZIE

You have the most beautiful lips I have ever seen.

NAIDA

(*Rising.*)

Doctor Mackenzie!

MACKENZIE

You don't want me to make love to you then?

NAIDA

Make love to me?

MACKENZIE

It is very difficult not to. You are very beautiful. I worship your beauty—as if you were carved in marble and I kneeling below your pedestal—a humble student.

NAIDA

(*Going right.*)

I am going up to my room now. Good night.

[74]

MACKENZIE

Just now as you stand there. A thought came over me.
I have a whim—will you humor me in it? Stand up there—
(*Meaning the pulpit.*)

Let me see you there—high above me—as inexorable
as God.

NAIDA

(*Laughing.*)

What an absurd idea. You want me to go up there?

MACKENZIE

Yes. Please. You will look so exquisite.

NAIDA

(*Amused and interested.*)

I might fall down.

MACKENZIE

Then I will catch you.

(*She runs up the steps and stands in the pulpit,
amused to look beautiful and be admired.*)

NAIDA

How do I look?

MACKENZIE

(*Kneeling.*)

I am humble. Command me.

NAIDA

It is such a strange feeling to be in a pulpit. What are
you doing?

MACKENZIE

I am praying.

NAIDA

To God?

MACKENZIE

No. To you.

NAIDA

This is blasphemous. I command you to get up.

[75]

MACKENZIE

(Going to the steps.)

Give me some word from your world of beauty.

NAIDA

(Laughing and embarrassed.)

I am nervous.

MACKENZIE

My goddess has weakened. She gives me courage.

NAIDA

Doctor Mackenzie, I am coming down. Look out, I will fall.

MACKENZIE

That will be human and wonderful.

(He tries to touch her, but she eludes him.)

NAIDA

I don't like being divine.

MACKENZIE

(Goes to the doorway looking out into the moon light.)

The garden is wonderful.

NAIDA

(Following him and looking out.)

How white and still it is.

MACKENZIE

Oh, que le ciel coule en moi!

Que je me fonde en lui!

NAIDA

(Dreamily.)

Yes, to flow into the sky!

Oh, if this were all as beautiful as it seems.

[76]

MACKENZIE

It is! We will go far into the garden—back to the pool. You and I will dance with the moon—two satyrs and a nymph.

NAIDA

(Looking at him intently.)

And if I do go . . . ?

MACKENZIE

You are going. Come . . .

(Almost as if hypnotized she goes forward slowly. They go out and down into the garden. There is a silence in which the audience is made to feel the mystery of the moon light night, and to follow in imagination the two who are walking down to the garden.)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: Breakfast porch at Roselands, the following morning. Steps to the garden off left, back. Potted trees and plants along the low rail. Entrance right, at back. A screen before this. Another entrance left. Wall fountain with growing vines. Marble bench near this. Breakfast table right, with chairs. Serving table against the right wall. MRS. DAVIS, MR. DAVIS, AUNTIE seated at the breakfast table.

MRS. DAVIS

Vy can't beople get up in de morning? It's chust as easy ass lying in bett.

(To Auntie.)

Why don't you have some eggs?

[77]

AUNTIE

No, tank you, Lena. Dey don't agree mitt me. Vat am I to do ven notting agrees mitt me?

MRS. DAVIS

(To Jacob.)

She iss too mean to eat eggs. Vat if dey are dear? Von hass to live I subbose.

No eggs for my sister dis morning, Caroline.

AUNTIE

(Complaining.)

Caroline, vy don't you wear a clean apron?

MRS. DAVIS

It iss clean. I will tell my maids vat to veear!

(To Jacob.)

Ach, she iss getting vorse and vorse. I can't stand it much lonker. My nerves! I have nerves. Am I a jelly fish? I am going matt mitt her complaining.

JACOB

Dere, dere, sweetheart, she iss only olt and cranky. Don't fuss mitt her too much.

(Drinks his coffee.)

Batt coffee. Vy can't dat French cook make goot coffee?

MRS. DAVIS

(Tearfully.)

You see. You chust agree mitt Christianne in everyting. Dat's all Christianne's doing. Here I go and get de most egspensive cook I can find—just to blease you—and den you say he makes batt coffee.

(Drinks her coffee and then puts down her cup furiously.)

It iss batt! Vatt is de matter mitt him dis morning!

AUNTIE

(Rising.)

I vill make your coffee for you, Jacob. Like de coffee ve used to have in de olt country.

(Goes left.)

You chust wait. Christianne knows how to make coffee. French cooks! Whoever heard of a French cook!

(She goes out.)

MRS. DAVIS

Don't you dare go into my kitchen!

JACOB

Dere, dere, Lena. Let her make a little coffee if she wants to.

MRS. DAVIS

(Weeping.)

You don't loff me any more. All you care apout iss Christianne. I am only in de vay.

JACOB

Dere, dere, whoever heard of such a ting! I don't loff you!

MRS. DAVIS

No, you don't. Nopotty loffs me. I am chust in de vey. I vould pe bedder off deatt.

(Suddenly energetic.)

Caroline has forgotten de toast! Caroline!

(Violently.)

Caroline!

CAROLINE

(Entering.)

Yes, Mrs. Davis.

MRS. DAVIS

See dat you pring de toast on time hereafter. Caroline, iss your apron clean?

CAROLINE

Why, of course, Mrs. Davis.

MRS. DAVIS

Vell, vell, run along now. See vat dat olt pusy-botty is doing in my kitchen. I haff a goot mint to go and make de coffee myself.

(Eva and Herman enter.)

EVA

Good morning.

MRS. DAVIS

Goot morning, Efa. How is Barbara?

EVA

She's alright, thank you, mama.

MRS. DAVIS

Vass you up mitt her last night?

EVA

No, that's the worst part of it. She slept soundly the whole night through—and I was lying awake wondering why.

MRS. DAVIS

Dat's a mottern barent for you. Vy didn't you go ant find out?

HERMAN

I should like to see what happened to babies who were brought up under your methods, mama.

MRS. DAVIS

I subbose you tink ve killed our children? Vell, didn't I bring up Efa, ant Davitt, ant Ruby—aldough dey never get up in de morning.

RUBY

(Enters.)

What's that? Never get up in the morning? Here I am, anyway. Nice little anvil chorus we had at six P. X., Eva.

[30]

EVA

You needn't be rude to my child, Ruby.

RUBY

No, it wouldn't do me any good. But at least I can have some satisfaction in taking it out on you.

(To Mrs. Davis.)

Mama, may I go to the theatre today?

EVA

There's nothing to see so early in the season.

MRS. DAVIS

No, it's a waste of money.

HERMAN

They never put anything good on at this time, you know.

EVA

No, they take this time to get rid of the promising young American dramatists we're always hearing so much about.

RUBY

Oh, of course there's nothing high brow, if that's what you mean. You and Herman think if a thing isn't copied from Shakespeare or Shaw it's no good.

EVA

Well, nearly everything you see in New York is copied from either one or the other.

RUBY

(Enthusiastically.)

This isn't. This is a real American play. Mayn't I go, mama?

MRS. DAVIS

Oh, vell, go if you must. I subbose it iss an immoral blay.

[31]

RUBY

Why should it be immoral, mama?

MRS. DAVIS

Vy not? Odderwise vy vout you care apout seeing it? Dis age is getting decadent. Everything is rotten. Tings are ass batt as dey vere in de olt times at de fall of Egypt.

HERMAN

Don't you mean the fall of the Roman Empire, mama?

MRS. DAVIS

Vat difference does it make? Egypt must have fallen also. Tink of Cleopatra!

(Ruby and Herman laugh.)

AUNTIE

(Entering with a cup of coffee.)

Vat are dey laughing at? Are dey laughing at me, Jacob? Dere, dat is real old fashioned Jewish coffee.

(Goes out with dignity left.)

And dere iss notting to laugh about in Jewish coffee.

(Caroline comes in with mail.)

RUBY

Oh, good—the mail!

MRS. DAVIS

(With importance.)

Here—for you, papa. Here iss anudder. Looks like your lawyer. You've forgotten to send him dose contracts. Here—for me—for Davitt . . . I don't seem to know de hand-writing. For Davitt . . . For Herman . . .

RUBY

Anything for me, mama?

[82]

MRS. DAVIS

(Sharply.)

Vait until I come to you. For Ada.

(Smells it.)

Dat friend of hers always uses some scent. Pooh! Eva
. . . I can't tink from whom it might pe.

EVA

Well, give it to me, mama, and perhaps I can find out.

MRS. DAVIS

(Hands the letter to Eva, still looking at the envelope.)

Anudder for you, papa. It's de first of de month. Von for you, Caroline.

CAROLINE

Thank you, Mrs. Davis.

MRS. DAVIS

(Reading the post card first.)

It's from your sister in Atlantic City. Here's de baber, papa.

(All open their letters. Naida enters. She looks pale.)

NAIDA

Good morning.

ALL

Morning.

MRS. DAVIS

Here's a letter from dat friend of yours in de city, Ada. I could tell it a mile. Tink of using scent on your baper.

(Hands the letter to Naida.)

EVA

(To Mrs. Davis.)

I hope you have made arrangements to have Doctor Mackenzie and Doctor Hotchkiss taken down to the station, mama.

MRS. DAVIS

Are dey leaving dis morning? Dey didn't say anything to me apout it.

EVA

Well, we have to arrange for it, anyway. I will need the roadster for the marketing.

RUBY

I want the roadster myself. We're all going in swimming.

MRS. DAVIS

You can't go in swimming. It's after Labor Day. Whoever heard of anybody going in swimming after Labor Day?

JACOB

Who iss going to take *me* down?

RUBY

I am, papa, as I do every morning.

MRS. DAVIS

Ruby can take you down in the Packard and let Henri wait for Doctor Mackenzie.

EVA

Don't forget Herman. Herman has to go to New Jersey today.

HERMAN

Oh, don't bother about me. I'm not too good for the train.

RUBY

Well, I want the roadster, and if Eva . . .

MRS. DAVIS

(*Sharply.*)

Efa iss to have de roadster!

[84]

RUBY

Why can't Henri take her later in the Packard?

EVA

Go in swimming later.

RUBY

But it's high tide just at eleven.

EVA

Well, go in at low tide. Do something to be obliging.

RUBY

Obliging! I don't see how you can talk about being obliging! Well, of all the . . .

JACOB

(Jumping up, out of temper.)

Roadster, Packard, Packard, roadster! Such a bodder! I will get a taxi. Nopotty cares about me. Vedder I walk or fly or vat!

RUBY

(Contrite.)

Now, papa, don't go and get angry. You know I'd not want to have you ride down in any old taxi. I will take you down in the roadster as I do every morning.

EVA

I don't see why Henri can't run papa down in the Packard and then come back for Doctor Mackenzie.

RUBY

(Petting him.)

Because papa likes to have me take him down, don't you, papa? Come on, now, or you'll miss your train.

(They go out back.)

EVA

I don't see why you don't say something to Ruby, mama. She is getting positively unmanageable.

[85]

MRS. DAVIS

Ada, you spoil her. Dat's de whole trouble. Since you haff been here she hass peen like a different girl. She used to pe shy ant quiet. Now—Gott! Dere's notting she does not do—and vat she does not do she tinks about.

EVA

And she's always talking about being *suppressed*.

MRS. DAVIS

Suppressed! Vell, vy shouldn't she be? If you don't suppress human nature vat *can* you do mitt it?

HERMAN

(*Reading the newspaper.*)

Speaking of human nature—they've let Hollister off.

EVA

Acquitted him?

MRS. DAVIS

A lot of soft headed fools! He shoul't pe made to die. Vat right hass von man to take anudder man's life? A nize fix we vould pe in if everypotty vent around killing de people dey didn't like. Dere wouldn't pe anypotty left in de world.

EVA

(*Rising.*)

I must see that the children get out. Herman, will you come and help Tillie with the baby carriage?

HERMAN

(*Patiently.*)

Yes, dear.

(*They go out left.*)

MRS. DAVIS

(*Rising.*)

Look at de eggs. Nopotty hass finished dere eggs. No-potty knows how hard it iss to keep chickens at dis time.

[86]

(*She goes out right.*)

(*Naida has been bored and annoyed through all the foregoing. Now that she is alone, she reaches for the paper and reads it intently. After a moment Doctor Mackenzie enters.*)

MACKENZIE

Oh, good morning.

NAIDA

Good morning.

(*Mackenzie goes to breakfast table and sits there.*)

(*Caroline enters.*)

MACKENZIE

Oh, good morning.

CAROLINE

Good morning, sir.

MACKENZIE

Nothing for me, thanks. Will you see about the car? I have some bags in the hall.

CAROLINE

I will see that they are taken down for you, sir.

MACKENZIE

Thank you.

(*Caroline goes out.*)

How absurd this is. I knew that we would run into each other. I've been up for an hour—waiting for you to get away—and here you are, just as I knew you would be. Well, perhaps it is better so.

(*After a moment.*)

I have been reading your husband's literature—before breakfast. I got quite fascinated in *The Life of the Caterpillar*. Does your husband spend his nights reading *The Life of the Caterpillar*?

(*He goes over to her.*)

Please don't hate me so very much.

[87]

NAIDA

I don't hate you.

MACKENZIE

Oh, yes you do. You hate me for being in such a hurry to leave you. You hate me for reading your husband's *Life of the Caterpillar* when you were waiting in agony to talk to me and get our relations settled.

NAIDA

Oh!

MACKENZIE

You may as well admit it. My dear lady, I understand women. I know exactly what you have been going through. Well—I am sorry. I am really tremendously sorry. Does that help?

NAIDA

Please!

MACKENZIE

Why are you angry with me because I am not in love with you?

NAIDA

But I am not in love with you.

MACKENZIE

Nevertheless, you feel that you should have some kind of hold upon me, don't you?

NAIDA

Oh, why talk at all?

MACKENZIE

After last night you think that we should have some tie between us—some bond—isn't that so? It is revolting to you to think that things like that can happen and mean nothing, have no importance of any kind whatsoever . . .

[88]

NAIDA

That is exactly what I have been thinking. If I didn't you love . . . Why Should . . . That is what I cannot understand.

MACKENZIE

That is the trouble with our whole American sentiment. It is not based on knowledge of real life. That is why all of our books and our plays never ring true. Life is never a complete harmonious chain of events woven regularly with the hours, with a definite beginning and a definite ending.

NAIDA

What is life!

MACKENZIE

My dear lady, I am not an American novelist. I would never presume to compress the infinite into any small receptacle of my own making.

NAIDA

Oh, if you would only stop making speeches!

MACKENZIE

Come, don't be angry with me. I am really not to blame. It was the night, and the moon and the co-inciding of our moods.

NAIDA

Oh, that I should be such a fool! Why, if anyone had told me . . .

MACKENZIE

If anyone had told you you would have hotly denied it. And yet all afternoon—all evening—you and I were gradually, unmistakably leading up to the occasion which finally arrived—to the opportunity—the garden—and the rest—Things happen that way.

(David enters. He looks haggard.)

[89]

DAVID
David!

DAVID
Naida . . . Mackenzie . . .
(*Sits at table facing audience.*)

MACKENZIE
Thank you, Davis, Good bye. I enjoyed reading your book very much—The Life of the Caterpillar—very fascinating . . .
(*Exit right.*)

DAVID
Is mother down?

NAIDA
Long ago. It's late.

DAVID
Yes, I suppose so.

NAIDA
You slept at the laboratory?

DAVID
Yes.

NAIDA
Were you comfortable there?

DAVID
Quite.
(*David reads letters—puts down one he has read.*)
Well!

NAIDA
What is it, David?

DAVID
Why you would scarcely believe this, Naida. They've met already. Mackenzie didn't say a word to me about it. Not an intimation. Why Naida, I can scarcely believe it.

NAIDA

What is it, David? Have they definitely decided upon anyone?

DAVID

Hotchkiss. They've chosen Hotchkiss.

NAIDA

David . . . I am sorry.

DAVID

(After a moment.)

It almost takes the breath out of me.

NAIDA

I know. You cared so much. You worked so hard.

(The tears start to her eyes and her lips tremble.)

If I could only help . . . If I could only . . .

DAVID

(Rising and moving away.)

Please . . . not now—I didn't sleep. I'm all worn out.

NAIDA

I hurt you last night. I can't understand what made me be so cruel.

DAVID

Oh, don't talk about that. I can't talk now. Don't you see how I am this morning?

NAIDA

Don't go. Stay and talk with me. Oh, David, won't you forgive me for what I said?

DAVID

Can you forgive me for being a . . .

NAIDA

Oh, my dear . . . !

[91]

DAVID

What chance have I? As long as I am underneath doing my work—helping along—I am alright. But the minute I want to step out and claim recognition—superiority—I am held down. I am told to stay where I belong.

NAIDA

And even I . . . David, say you forgive me.

DAVID

Oh, Naida, not now!

NAIDA

Then you won't forgive me?

DAVID

Oh, I do, I do, of course. Let me alone . . . I must be alone! I am going out to my laboratory to work.

NAIDA

The laboratory!

(Helplessly.)

What about me?

DAVID

About you?

NAIDA

I—can't be alone with myself today, David. Stay with me just for today. Let us take a long walk together. Then we can talk together—then we can be with each other without anyone else around.

(As he starts to go left.)

No, no, don't go. Please don't go, David. Please stay with me, David, David . . .

David, something terrible has happened. I have something to tell you . . . I must tell you something which will break your heart.

DAVID

(Falling to his knees before her.)

Thank God! Thank God!

[92]

David . . . ?

NAIDA

I have been tortured so.

DAVID

Tell me.

NAIDA

Last night . . .

DAVID

Last night?

NAIDA

I couldn't work. I couldn't sleep. I wanted to talk everything over with you. I was coming back to you . . . through the garden . . .

DAVID

The garden?

NAIDA

Yes, Naida, the garden.

NAIDA

When you were walking back, I was behind the hedge. I heard everything you two said.

NAIDA

You heard?

DAVID

I crept back to the laboratory. I have had an old revolver there. I nearly—killed myself.

NAIDA

David . . . why not—him—and me?

DAVID

Because I am the one in the way.

NAIDA

Don't! Oh, don't do that!

(Going to him.)

David, look at me. Look into my eyes. Can you ever have faith in me again? Can you ever believe in me again?

[93]

DAVID

I don't know. I don't know anything any more.

NAIDA

Oh, how can I make you understand? What I don't understand myself. I was unhappy, that was it. I was all mixed up, I even began to believe that you didn't care for me any more.

DAVID

That I didn't care for you!

NAIDA

You were so cold and distant. Then last night . . . about my gown I was hurt and angry. Then he . . . Oh, you know what he is!

DAVID

Last night I reasoned with myself. I reasoned it all out. I was thinking of you. How different you are from me. Even when we were happiest together, Naida, I always noticed it. I have never been the man for you. I must be wise about it. I must think of your good. Perhaps you have done right, dear. He is the man you should have.

NAIDA

Oh, my dear . . .

DAVID

I have made up my mind not to stand in your way.

NAIDA

Oh, David, you don't see. You don't understand how it is. You couldn't. You are too fine. He doesn't love me. I don't love him. Don't you see? It was simply . . .

DAVID

You mean that you were just another of his . . .
Good God! Then he simply . . .

[94]

(Without another word he goes off quickly down the steps, Naida stands watching him anxiously. Doctor Hotchkiss enters.)

HOTCHKISS

Good morning.

NAIDA

Oh, it's Doctor Hotchkiss.

HOTCHKISS

What a lovely, fresh morning.

(Goes toward the table.)

It is such a fresh, lovely morning I was thinking of walking down to the station. It isn't far, is it?

NAIDA

No, not at all.

Let me ring for your breakfast.

(She rings the bell under the table.)

HOTCHKISS

Thank you.

(Looks out.)

It really is a lovely morning.

(Caroline enters—in answer to her question.)

Just coffee, thank you.

(Caroline exits.)

I suppose when one is in the country he should get the benefit of fresh eggs. It's a great pleasure to eat a really fresh egg, isn't it? After the cold storage eggs one gets in the city. I hear, by the way, someone has invented a new way of storing eggs which enables them to keep their original properties much longer than . . .

NAIDA

I wonder if you would be good enough to excuse me, Doctor Hotchkiss. I don't seem to be very well this morning. I really feel quite faint.

[95]

HOTCHKISS

Why, of course, Mrs. Davis. You really looke quite pale. I'm so very sorry. Is there anything I can do . . .

NAIDA

Oh, please don't bother. I will go up to my room for a while.

(She goes out.)

(Mrs. Davis comes running in from back.)

MRS. DAVIS

Caroline, nopotty hass fed Mr. Davis's white rats and guinea pigs.

(To Hotchkiss.)

Good morning.

Guinea pigs. Dat is science! To spend your whole life mitt white rats and guinea pigs. Till you pecome a white rat or a guinea pig yourself.

You are leaving us, Doctor Hotchkiss?

HOTCHKISS

Right away. It was such a lovely fresh morning I thought I would walk down.

(Going to her.)

Thank you, Mrs. Davis. You have been very kind.

MRS. DAVIS

Dat's notting. It vass a bleasure to haff you here, Doctor . . .

HOTCHKISS

Yes, Mrs. Davis?

MRS. DAVIS

About my poy? You vill see vat you can do about his abbointment?

HOTCHKISS

I will do all I can. I am always your friend, Mrs. Davis —and David's friend.

MRS. DAVIS

Thank you, thank you, Doctor. You are a goot man.

(As he goes out back, Aunties comes from the garden with a basket of flowers over her arm. She wears a big drooping garden hat with a green veil.)

AUNTIE

Look, Lena, de roses! Aren't they pretty. Tea roses. Chust like de olt country. Not so fine, of course. Ach, it's so varm in de garden.

(Feels her heart.)

MRS. DAVIS

You vill kill yourself doing so much. Put you never listen. Ven you die, den it vill pe time enough to see dat I am right I subbose.

AUNTIE

(Childishly.)

Let me show you, Lena.

(Pulls out a large rose.)

Look at dat. Like a papy's hand! Ach, how I loff de flowers.

MRS. DAVIS

(Examining the basket critically.)

Chust as I tought. You've picked dem too soon. Look at dat. De y aren't even bloomed yet.

AUNTIE

Notting I do iss right. I am always wrong.

You must speak to the gardener, Lena. De best rose bushes are covered mitt bugs. Covered!

(Ruby's voice is heard off back, frantically calling.)

RUBY

(Off back.)

Mama. Mama, where are you?

[97]

MRS. DAVIS

Ruby. Here iss mama.

RUBY

(Running in.)

Mama, mama . . . Oh, mama . . . Something terrible has happened. Auntie . . .

MRS. DAVIS

Ruby, vat iss it? Tell me. Anyting happened to papa? Is it papa?

RUBY

No, David! Where is Naida? I must tell Naida.

(Calling loudly.)

Naida, Naida . . . How can I tell Naida.

DAVID

(Entering.)

Here I am, Ruby. I heard you, Ruby. . . .

Ruby, has anything happened to David?

RUBY

Naida—down at the station . . . something terrible happened. David shot someone.

NAIDA

Ruby, was it . . . was it . . . ?

RUBY

Doctor Mackenzie.

MRS. DAVIS

Davitt! My Davitt! Oh, my Gott! My poy! My little poy! Henri, Henri. I vant de car right away. Henri. Vy doesn't he come?

(She runs out frantically calling.)

RUBY

(Sobbing.)

Mama, mama, I am coming with you.

(She goes off back.)

NAIDA

(Falls back against the door in a fit of violent laughter which grows more and more hysterical until she finally shrieks out.)

I'm so glad! I'm so glad!

AUNTIE

(Horried.)

Ada . . .

(She goes to Naida and shakes her fiercely and as Naida continues to laugh hysterically she talks to her, her old voice growing strong with emotion until finally it succeeds in calming Naida whose hysterical laughter turns to tears—and she falls into Auntie's arms, weeping.)

Ada! Davitt iss everyting to me, Ada. You don't know . . . Dere vass a time ven Auntie vass everyting to him, too. Ven he vass a little poy. He vass such a gentle little poy, Ada—not like udder poy . . . Not like udder poy . . .

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE: *Same as Act II. September of the following year. Ornaments are removed. The room is ready to be closed for a long time. Chairs, couches, etc., have covers of linen. MRS. DAVIS sits at right before a folding card table, playing Patience. EVA sits at left well forward, knitting. It is about eight-thirty on a disagreeable rainy evening.*

MRS. DAVIS

Ditt you bay the expressman, Eva?

EVA

(Patiently.)

Yes, mama.

MRS. DAVIS

I subbose de furniture vill never stant de moving—ant storage. De vay dey vere packing my china! My powdered blue, Eva!

(After a pause.)

Ven are dey coming tomorrow to finish packing up de goot furniture?

EVA

At eight, mama. You heard . . . you were standing right there when he told Caroline.

MRS. DAVIS

Ya. I hope dey don't break de china. Vat are you knitting, Eva?

EVA

I told you, mama. A little pair of shoes.

MRS. DAVIS

Oh, yes. To tink of your having anudder child.

EVA

You had better send in one or two of the maids tomorrow, mama, to get the place cleaned up and things ready.

MRS. DAVIS

Vy do you always tell me what to do? You are ass batt ass Christianne. I haff kept house for tirty years. I shoul't know how to move out of von by dis time. To tink of my taking an abartment in New York after all dese years I haff said I vould never live in an abartment.

EVA

You will be more comfortable there, mama.

MRS. DAVIS

Yes, I certainly cannot live any longer in dis house. Here it iss September alretty. Vat ve haff gone through since last September! Haff you seen de bapers dis evening, Eva?

EVA

Yes, mama.

MRS. DAVIS

Oh, I cannot talk about it. Eva, if he had only never met Ada! She comes along—and vat does she do? She turns hiss head—mitt her i and her n and her singing nonsense ant all de rest. Oh, if she had only been de von to die!

EVA

Mama!

MRS. DAVIS

Oh, Efa, to haff dis disgrace in my old age! Efa, you may pe sorry to haff anudder child. Vat iss it? Suffering. All suffering. You giff your life for dem over ant over again. Vat do dey do? Dey chust claw your heart out.

(Slams down the cards and jumps up.)

Ach, Gott! I cannot blay dis Solitaire. Look at dat! I haff got stuck again. Herman vent to court today, didn't he?

EVA

Yes, mama, you know he did.

MRS. DAVIS

I vake up in de middle of de night—I say—Davitt! Iss it you, Davitt? My son! Iss it all drue? Iss dis my own son?

EVA

Mama, please . . .

[101]

MRS. DAVIS

Dere, dere . . . Dis iss not goot for you. I will liff for your children, Efa. May Gott brotect you ant yours. I know dey are going to break my powdered blue. But vat does it matter, anyway? But you shoulth haff seen how careless dey were mitt de vase papa gafe me on our anniversary. Vat can keep Herman so? He iss always on time. Do you subbose he hass heard someting? Mr. Harcourt saitt today vouldt pe very important at de trial. Do you tink Mr. Harcourt iss a goot lawyer, Efa?

EVA

He is a very good man, mama. I am always telling you that. Everyone says that he did wonderfully with the case at the first trial, and that he has managed . . .

MRS. DAVIS

(Interrupting violently.)

But he cannot make an innocent man out of a guilty von, iss dat it?

EVA

He was Hollister's lawyer.

MRS. DAVIS

Hollister! Hollister got free. He vass guilty . . . but dey let him go. He defended hiss home. But Davitt . . . Davitt iss a different matter. Davitt is a . . .

EVA

Oh, mama!

MRS. DAVIS

Oh, vy iss everyvon so cruel? Vy do dey hate us so? Vat haff ve done? Am I to turn against my mudder's blood, my grantmudder's, ant her mutter ant grantmudder? Am I to pe ashamed of all de goot ant honest beople who haff lived straight and struggled ant fought dere vay dat I may pe able to live and haff my rights ven I am born? Vat iss

life den . . . but to love your own kint, to cling mitt your last breatt to your own flesh and blood! My mudder vass a Jew, my fadder vass a Jew. I am a Jew! I am proud to be a Jew! I vill fight for my own beople until I die!

EVA

Mama, don't get so excited. Go sit down and play your solitaire.

MRS. DAVIS

Solitaire, solitaire! Ven my brain iss on fire!

EVA

(Listening.)

I think I heard a car stop. I wonder if it could be Herman.

MRS. DAVIS

Herman vill at least giff us some real news. Vat can you tell from de newspapers? I shoul't like to know vat kint of men write for dose bapers. Do dey tink dat life iss a choke, or a blay dat you sit at ant nopotty really cares? Ada! Ada's hat, her tress, her complexion, de vay she looked, de vay she talked, de vay Ada does dis, and de vay Ada does dat, as if she vass de heroine in a blay. *Ada*—ven my poy iss on trial for hiss life!

(Herman enters.)

What made you late, Herman?

HERMAN

I've had so much to do, mama.

(To Eva.)

How do you feel, dear? Headache gone?

EVA

It's better. Did you bring the toys for the children?

HERMAN

Yes, I sent them up with Caroline. How do you feel, mama?

MRS. DAVIS

Vat happened, Herman? Vat happened about Davitt?

HERMAN

Yes, mama, I am coming to that. This afternoon I received a note from Doctor Hotchkiss.

MRS. DAVIS

Vat ditt Doctor Hotchkiss say? Tank Gott ve haff von friend.

EVA

Is that what kept you so long, Herman?

HERMAN

Yes, with one thing and another. Eva, Doctor Hotchkiss is coming here tonight.

MRS. DAVIS

Doctor Hotchkiss iss coming here to see us! Someting terrible hass happened den.

EVA

Herman, has anything new taken place?

MRS. DAVIS

Herman, what ditt Doctor Hotchkiss say?

HERMAN

He telephoned me. He simply said—Tell Mrs. Davis not to get excited.

MRS. DAVIS

Tell Mrs. Davis not to get excited. Vat does he tink I am? A child? A foolish person? Am I such an olt voman to be talked to like dat? Excited. I vill get excited. I am excited!

(Walking away.)

Ach, Gott, vy can't I have any peace?

[104]

EVA

How long is he going to stay, Herman?

HERMAN

I don't know. The whole thing is a mystery to me.

MRS. DAVIS

Vat happened today, Herman? De newspapers saitt de jury vass sympathetic to Davitt. De plumber cried.

EVA

Oh, mama, you never read anything right.

HERMAN

There's Guyer . . .

EVA

The station master?

HERMAN

Yes. He is really the valuable witness.

MRS. DAVIS

Dat station master! Vat right hass he to meddle in our affairs. Vy, Efa, you ant I ourselves vent to hiss vife ven she vass sick ant took money ant food and even night drawers to de children.

HERMAN

You see he heard what passed between David and Mackenzie . . .

MRS. DAVIS

Don't say dat man's name!

EVA

What did he tell today?

HERMAN

Well, you see, he trips up the defense this way . . . Harcourt has explained David's action by the sudden and temporary insanity . . .

MRS. DAVIS

David insane! It's wicked to talk like dat!

EVA

Let Herman tell us, mama.

HERMAN

Well, you know all that . . .

EVA

Yes, but what did Guyer say?

HERMAN

Guyer swears that David did not fire until Mackenzie said the words—You little Jew!

EVA

Oh!

MRS. DAVIS

He fired den . . . ven he vass called a Jew?

Oh, my poy!

(She goes right, crying.)

My poor poy!

(She goes out.)

EVA

Then this is what they have been waiting to spring all along?

HERMAN

Yes. Guyer has been clever. I think he has wanted to help David.

EVA

Do you think he has the slightest chance, Herman?

HERMAN

It all looks bad.

EVA

You talked with Mr. Harcourt?

[106]

HERMAN

Just for a minute. You see Mackenzie was so powerful . . . All the doctors have been working on his side . . . that is, against David.

EVA

But Doctor Hotchkiss seems to have some influence. He had David sent out to the sanitarium. He's comfortable there . . . at least it isn't like being a prisoner . . . Although they won't allow any of us to see him . . . Oh, it all makes me so nervous . . .

HERMAN

Why don't you go up to your room and rest? Even if you don't go to bed just yet. It has all been so hard for you . . . just now . . .

EVA

No, I must be here to meet Doctor Hotchkiss when he comes. Someone must, and you can't count on mama. You go up and see if the children are alright, will you, dear?

HERMAN

I will tell Caroline to get a room ready.

(He goes out. Naida enters.)

EVA

(Jumping up.)

Naida!

NAIDA

Hello, Eva. I couldn't get anything to take me up, so I walked. Oh, you have a fire. How good it looks.

(Goes toward the fire.)

It's getting cold, isn't it?

EVA

Naida, I never thought to see you here again.

NAIDA

I never thought to be here again. What is the matter? Why is everything in shrouds?

[107]

EVA

Mama is selling Roselands, Naida.

NAIDA

Will anyone buy it, do you think?

EVA

Of course. What makes you think they wouldn't?

NAIDA

Nothing. Why shouldn't they? Furniture is a funny thing, isn't it?

EVA

I must say I don't see anything funny about it.

NAIDA

This couch, that chair, the table where Auntie always kept her knitting . . . They are all like people . . . all talking to me at once.

EVA

Naida, why are you here?

NAIDA

No, they are like devils—screaming at me.

(Trying to be offhand.)

I suppose you heard about my taking a position?

EVA

Yes, we heard, of course. Why did you do that, Naida?

NAIDA

To make money. When I discovered that David had so little money really his own . . .

EVA

David has an income—as we all have.

[108]

NAIDA

But he is really dependent upon his mother for most of the big things he must have.

EVA

I think it was very poor taste of you to use the notoriety of our disgrace to advertise yourself.

NAIDA

I knew you would think that.

EVA

My mother would never have begrudged you money.

NAIDA

But she did, she did—until I began to sing in a public place.

EVA

I suppose you are to be congratulated that you can do it. You are very fortunate, Naida.

NAIDA

Fortunate? How?

EVA

In not being like the rest of us. We are so sensitive.

NAIDA

Oh! Where is Ruby? Is she here?

EVA

Ruby is away at school.

NAIDA

And how is Mr. Davis? And Auntie?

EVA

Auntie wasn't well today. She had a fainting spell. The trial has been very hard on her. As far as I can see you are the only one who has remained unchanged.

[109]

NAIDA

As far as you can see, Eva.

EVA

Naida, why are you here?

NAIDA

What is that you are making? It is so small.

EVA

It's a pair of shoes.

NAIDA

Shoes? Oh, it's for a baby. I never saw anything so small.

EVA

It's the right size. It's for a small baby.

NAIDA

(Suddenly.)

Eva . . . is it . . . for yours?

EVA

(Annoyed.)

Yes, of course. Don't be absurd, Naida.

NAIDA

(After a pause.)

How funny! How funny everything is.

EVA

I can't see anything funny about having a baby, Naida.

NAIDA

No, of course it isn't funny. I don't mean that. I am sorry, Eva.

EVA

Naida, why are you here?

NAIDA

Eva, I don't want Mrs. Davis to know I am here, if it can be helped. I don't want to see her. I can't see her. Eva, will you promise not to let her know that I am here?

EVA

But I don't see . . .

NAIDA

Promise me.

[110]

EVA

I promise, of course. It is best for her.

NAIDA

(Who walks about restlessly.)

How the wind is blowing!

(Irritably.)

Eva, for Heaven's sake, stop that knitting!

EVA

I don't see why my knitting should annoy you.

(Herman enters.)

HERMAN

Eva, mama wants to see you upstairs.

(Seeing Naida.)

Naida!

NAIDA

How are you, Herman?

HERMAN

What, are *you* here? Eva, think of Naida's being here.

EVA

You'd better come upstairs right away, Herman. Mama will probably want you.

(She goes out right.)

HERMAN

You are almost like a ghost, popping up like this, Naida.

NAIDA

Yes, this house is full of ghosts.

HERMAN

You're not looking run down at all. In fact, I never saw you looking better.

NAIDA

Is that a reproach?

HERMAN

Oh, no, not at all. I meant it as a compliment.

NAIDA

I suppose you did. Oh, Herman, please don't start in now and pay me compliments.

[111]

HERMAN

I think that is very unkind of you, Naida. As if I were the flirtatious sort and all that, you know. I have always wanted to be friendly with you, that's all. I am the only member of the family who has understood you.

NAIDA

I suppose that was why you were so ready to talk about me in court.

HERMAN

I merely told the truth.

NAIDA

You merely gave opinions. I don't care! How silly! I like you. At any rate I don't hate you. Oh, why did I come here? When did you hear from Hotchkiss?

HERMAN

Today. He is coming here tonight.

NAIDA

(Excitedly breaking out.)

Tonight! I was right then! I risked it!

HERMAN

What do you mean, Naida? Risked what?

NAIDA

Do you hear anything? It's the wind perhaps. It sounded like a car, though.

HERMAN

He'll come by train most likely. There isn't any until after eleven.

NAIDA

No, he will come by automobile.

HERMAN

Did he tell you?

NAIDA

No, I just know.

HERMAN

You're nervous. You're trembling like a leaf.

[112]

NAIDA

No, I am not nervous. I don't feel nervous at all. Go and see if anyone came, will you?

(He goes out left.)

EVA

(Entering.)

Naida, you can go up to your old room now if you wish. I put a lamp in there, and there are some of your books you left here

NAIDA

Thank you, Eva.

(Going to Eva, gently.)

You don't look very well, Eva. You really don't look well. How curiously far apart we are, Eva. I am sorry.

EVA

Mama is in Auntie's room just now. She won't hear you.

NAIDA

I understand. Thank you, Eva.

(She goes out right. Herman enters.)

HERMAN

Eva, why is she here?

EVA

To bring fresh trouble upon us all. Oh, if she had never come into this house!

HERMAN

She's looking well, too, isn't she?

EVA

You always have thought so, Herman.

HERMAN

Now, Eva, I hope you don't think . . .

CAROLINE

(Entering.)

Doctor Hotchkiss is here, Mrs. Goldschmidt.

EVA

Here he is.

(As he enters.)

Good evening.

HOTCHKISS

Good evening, Mrs. Goldschmidt. Do you know anything of Mrs. Davis . . . I mean David's wife, of course. I have been trying to reach her all afternoon.

HERMAN

She is here. She came this evening.

HOTCHKISS

Ah! She is here then!

EVA

They aren't going to let David off, are they? Tell us, frankly, Doctor Hotchkiss. There's no hope, is there?

HOTCHKISS

Not as far as the law is concerned, Mrs. Goldschmidt.

HERMAN

What do you mean by that?

EVA

Do you mean then that David . . . ?

HOTCHKISS

Your brother has escaped from the Sanitarium. He will be here within a half hour.

EVA

Doctor! Herman, do you hear?

HERMAN

You are helping him in this, Doctor Hotchkiss?

HOTCHKISS

His wife made the plan. It has been her courage and faith which has made it all possible. She has done everything in her power to save him. I have done what I can to help her.

EVA

But how is this possible? How can he run away like this . . .

HOTCHKISS

David sails tonight for South America—there is a small scientific school in an out-of-the-way part of Peru. I have made arrangements for him to work in the pathological department there.

HERMAN

(*Awed.*)

Do you realize that you are acting in defiance of the law?

HOTCHKISS

I realize what I am doing.

EVA

Oh, Doctor Hotchkiss, you don't realize what all this means. You scientists are too taken up with theories. You never see things as they really are. This simply means fresh disgrace and notoriety and misery for us all.

(*Mrs. Davis enters.*)

MRS. DAVIS

(*Entering.*)

Doctor! Doctor, vy are you here? Vat iss happening? I knew somting vass taking place. Eva, vy do you look like dat? Have dey decided? Iss dis de end den?

EVA

Mama . . .

Mama, Naida and Doctor Hotchkiss have made arrangements . . . David is running away . . . He is coming here tonight.

MRS. DAVIS

He iss running away. Iss dis true, Doctor?

HOTCHKISS

He will be here in a very short while.

MRS. DAVIS

(*Joyously.*)

Davitt vill pe here . . . here in my house again . . . home . . .

(*Suddenly grave.*)

But de law . . . de law . . . it hass not let him go?

HOTCHKISS

No.

MRS. DAVIS

My poy!

[115]

HOTCHKISS

Don't you understand what this means? It means that instead of being put to death like a miserable criminal David will go away . . . he and his wife will go away to South America where David can have quiet and seclusion . . . where he can carry on his work.

MRS. DAVIS

He ant his wife? Ada vill haff him den?

HOTCHKISS

My dear Mrs. Davis, do you really mean . . .

MRS. DAVIS

Vat difference does Davitt make to her anyway? She never loved him. Hasn't she broven dat? Yet she can haff him. My son! Dere hass not been a night I haff not cried for him. Vy is everyting so unfair, Doctor? Vy iss it dat goot people are made to suffer in dis vorld and batt people always haff tings go dere vay? Oh, I don't understand!

(As Jacob enters.)

Papa, Davitt iss running away from de Sanitarium. He iss coming here tonight.

JACOB

Davitt is running away?

EVA

Naida and Doctor Hotchkiss have planned for him to escape to South America.

JACOB

He iss running away from de law?

MRS. DAVIS

Yes, Jacob, he iss escaping like a criminal. Our poy!

JACOB

Davie!

(All during the following he stands quiet and stricken watching the others in amazement and pain.)

MRS. DAVIS

Mitt Ada, too, papa. He iss running away mitt Ada.

EVA

Naida and he will be happy. They can begin over again. But we will have the thing over us all our lives. It isn't fair. It isn't right.

HERMAN

People never think of others. They are always thinking of themselves. If David had only stopped to think of his own family . . .

EVA

Yes, Herman, why couldn't he think of us? We will be watched like criminals.

MRS. DAVIS

All he tinks of is Ada. Ada!

(Naida enters.)

NAIDA

(Ignoring all but Doctor Hotchkiss she goes up to him eagerly.)

Doctor Hotchkiss? You did come!

MRS. DAVIS

Ada, vat are you doing in my house?

NAIDA

(To Hotchkiss.)

Have they started?

HOTCHKISS

Yes.

NAIDA

Thank God!

MRS. DAVIS

Naida, you haff no right here. Ven you left my house you left it for goot.

NAIDA

(To Hotchkiss.)

What time did they start?

HOTCHKISS

At eight.

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NAIDA

At eight. And it's past ten. Do you think that it should take that long?

HOTCHKISS

Baker telephoned me when they started. He said everything was alright.

MRS. DAVIS

Ve vould never pe vere ve are if it vassn't for you, Ada. You are de cause of all our misery.

NAIDA

It shouldn't take so long. Can anything have happened?

MRS. DAVIS

Ada, you have no right to my poy after vat you haff done.

JACOB

Mama!

MRS. DAVIS

Don't try to stop me. I vill say vat I haff on my heart. If Ada vass a goot voman she vould never haff done vat she hass. And if she had von scrap—von scrap—of decency in her she vould know dat she hass no holt on Davitt now. She has no right to him.

EVA

It would have been better if you had never married David, Naida. Then the outcome of your affairs would have been your own look-out. Why should we all be made to suffer for the selfishness of you two?

HERMAN

If you only stopped to think of other people . . .

MRS. DAVIS

You never treated me like a mudder. I vass always Mrs. Davis to you. You always treated me like de dirt under your feet. Oh, I am not a fool. I know ven beople are laughing at me. You always ridiculed me. You taught Davitt to do it. You taught Davitt to look down on hiss own mudder.

EVA

It is true, Naida. You never tried to become one of us.

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HERMAN

You never tried to make a friend of Eva . . . your husband's sister.

JACOB

Mama, Eva . . . !

MRS. DAVIS

And all the time you vere in de house you never put yourself out to be kint. You never did de tings vomen do— notting for de children, notting for papa . . .

JACOB

Lena . . .

MRS. DAVIS

Or myself, or even Auntie. You were rude to all our friends. You hated us from de first day you met us, from de very first day. You made fun of us, and looked down on us, and despised us because ve are Jews!

JACOB

(Growing impatient.)

Mama.

MRS. DAVIS

Don't stop me! My heart is breaking. I curse de day dat Davitt ever saw you, Ada. I curse de day you vass born. I never vant to look into your face nor hear your name ass long ass I live!

JACOB

(Aroused at last.)

Keep still!

MRS. DAVIS

Jacob!

JACOB

Keep still, I say. Dis iss not time for quarreling. Doctor Hotchkiss, answer me, why iss Davitt coming here tonight?

NAIDA

(Quickly.)

To see you, to see his mother, to see his own people before he goes. He is risking everything for that.

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JACOB

Do you hear? Mama, do you hear dat? Your son is risking his life, his freedom, his happiness, to come home again for von look at us, his own flesh ant blood. And here you are, quarreling, calling names, being bitter and unkind. Mama, pe humble before your son . . . he has had much suffering.

(There is a silence. All wait. Suddenly Naida calls out.)

NAIDA

There it is! There's the car!

(Doctor Hotchkiss goes out. After a minute David enters. He is altered. He is pale and thin, his eyes haunted by a thousand imaginings. He looks about the group dully as a man who comes from the dark into the light.)

MRS. DAVIS

Davitt!

DAVID

(Very low.)

Mama . . .

(His eyes travel slowly from one to the other, and he mumbles their names.)

Papa . . . Herman . . . Eva . . .

(His eyes rest on Naida at first dazedly, then curiously, finally hungrily, and piteously.)

Naida . . .

NAIDA

(Low.)

David . . .

MRS. DAVIS

Davitt, my Davitt.

DAVID

Mama! You don't look well, mam. Papa, too—quite thin . . . And Eva . . . All of you . . . If it had only been just myself.

JACOB

Mama and I have prayed for you—every night.

DAVID

Yes. I seem to be seeing your faces for the first time . . .
What sweet faces they are . . . so patient . . . Mama . . .
I am so tired.

JACOB

Davitt, you haff not asked about Auntie.

DAVID

Yes, Auntie? Where is she?

JACOB

Auntie is sick, Davitt. She iss in bett.

MRS. DAVIS

Come upstairs ant see Auntie, Davitt. She talks of notting
put you, Davitt. Come, mitt mama.

(As he takes her arm.)

Dat's right. Lean on mama's arm, Davitt.

JACOB

(As he and Mrs. Davis go out with David.)

You vill pe surprised, Davitt—dere is a change in
Auntie . . .

*(They go out . . . Eva weeps. Herman and she go
out after the others. Doctor Hotchkiss enters.)*

NAIDA

You have been so wonderful. How can I ever thank you?

HOTCHKISS

You have been the wonderful one.

NAIDA

Everything has gone alright? They got away alright—
no one knew?

HOTCHKISS

Only the Doctor. He has been so kind.

NAIDA

And our passage?

HOTCHKISS

I have it. She is a sailing boat and carries a cargo. You

and David will be the only passengers. Of course you realize, Mrs. Davis, what all this means?

NAIDA

That I will have to be careful?

HOTCHKISS

Always. On board you must be known as an invalid. You must never leave the cabin.

Where is David now?

NAIDA

Upstairs. His aunt is ill . . .

HOTCHKISS

We must start at once. Baker has had some trouble with his engine. When we are ready to start I will telephone out from the garage. You needn't bother to answer.

NAIDA

Why doesn't he come down?

HOTCHKISS

Hurry.

(He goes out left. David enters. He goes to Naida and takes her in his arms.)

DAVID

Naida!

NAIDA

Oh, my dearest!

(They cling to each other passionately.)

David, thank God for giving you to me again!

DAVID

My wife, my dearest, dearest love!

NAIDA

Did you ever think that this would happen again—we are together—in each other's arms.

DAVID

I never dared hope it. Let me see your face.

NAIDA

My face is close to yours, David.

DAVID

This is worth everything.

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NAIDA

Oh, let us sit down until the car is ready.

DAVID

Just to hear your voice again . . . to be able to touch you . . .

NAIDA

(Sitting beside him.)

Yes . . . I can't take my eyes from your face. David, lately, for the last months and since I have been in this house again—I have felt life stripped of everything, of all its illusions and narrowness. There are just the bare truths left—just our love—and our duty.

DAVID

How your eyes glow, Naida.

NAIDA

I am ready to sacrifice anything for that, David.

DAVID

Yes, that is what I wanted to talk to you about—sacrifice. Naida, do you realize the kind of life we are going into?

NAIDA

Yes, yes, I do realize.

DAVID

It will be entirely different from the life we have always known. We will be cut off entirely from human associations. We will have to deprive ourselves of a great deal. We will be watched, and we will be watching.

NAIDA

I am not afraid.

DAVID

We will have very little money. There will be small privations—these are harder to bear almost than big ones.

NAIDA

I know. I know. I will make our home. I don't care where it is or what it is. I will give my whole life for it, David. Don't you see? It is what I wanted all along—You! Only you! Oh, I can't hope to prove it to you all at once

. . . but you will see—little by little . . .

(The telephone bell rings.)

DAVID

(Startled.)

What is that?

NAIDA

It is Doctor Hotchkiss. It means that it is time for us to go. Oh, my God, how good you are to me!

(She takes his arm.)

You are my child, my sick child. I will nurse you, until you are well again. I will keep everything away from your heart until it is brave again. David, do you trust in me now?

EVA

(Entering.)

David. David, I want to speak to you . . .

DAVID

(Turning.)

Eva.

EVA

David, Auntie is worse all at once. A great change has come over her. Mama is telephoning for the doctor again.

NAIDA

(Growing white.)

Auntie!

DAVID

(Going toward Eva.)

Auntie is worse you say, Eva?

EVA

She called your name—twice.

DAVID

She called for me!

NAIDA

(Going to David—fearfully.)

David, we must hurry.

EVA

David, I am afraid she is going to die.

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DAVID
I will be right up, Eva. I am coming right up.

EVA

(*Going right.*)
I will tell her.
(*She goes out.*)

NAIDA

(*Pleading.*)
David . . .

DAVID
I must see Auntie. I cannot go without seeing her.

NAIDA
But we must go now. You heard the telephone bell.
That was the signal from Doctor Hotchkiss.

DAVID
I cannot go without seeing her first.

NAIDA

(*Following him.*)
She is an old woman. She herself would forgive you. Oh,
David, don't spoil it all now. Don't kill our lives now—now
just as we are beginning!

DAVID
Her poor old heart is not dead. She called me twice.

NAIDA
And I am calling you!

DAVID
Yes, Naida, you . . .
(*The telephone rings again.*)

NAIDA
There is Doctor Hotchkiss again . . .

DAVID
How can I run away like this and leave her? She was
living out her old days. She was happy in her own way.
With her knitting and her flowers. She had peace. And
then I took it all away from her. I know her old heart. I
know how she has suffered. Almost as much as you, Naida.

NAIDA

David, Stop! You are doing now just what caused all this terrible thing? You are listening to your ancestors.

DAVID

Yes, Naida, you are right. That is what I am doing.

NAIDA

Oh, come, dear. We are in the right. Come!

DAVID

You are right, Naida. I am chained to my ancestors. I am bound to all those who owned my past and who share my present. I have brought shame and disgrace and suffering upon my own people, Naida. I have wanted to die. I have wanted to die and pay for my crime. There was only one thing that made me want to live . . . my love for you. Don't you see? I couldn't see you, couldn't be near you. I couldn't hear your voice, couldn't see your eyes.

NAIDA

You felt that you should pay?

DAVID

Yes, I felt that. I still feel it.

NAIDA

And you wanted to be free—you wanted to go away—just because of me?

DAVID

Yes, yes, don't you see? The wanting you was so terrible I forgot everything . . . it excluded everything.

NAIDA

Then I was just another—sin?

DAVID

Don't say that!

NAIDA

I was calling you in spite of your sense of duty.

DAVID

Naida . . . Just as I am calling you now.

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NAIDA

And out there you would never forget. You would never forgive me. It would have been a mistake. Another mistake.
(*After a moment Naida turns to go back.*)

DAVID

Naida, what are you doing? Why do you turn away from me like that?

NAIDA

Oh, David, isn't the truth clear to you now? It is to me. For the first time I see it. You and I have never really been one. We could never really be one. I came into your life, something strange and new. You saw in me all the wild things you had missed and that was why you reached so eagerly for me, why for a time you thought you were so happy.

DAVID

We were happy.

NAIDA

But we never really understood each other. We never spoke the same language, dear, never asked the same things of life, never even agreed about the things which are most important. You tried, I tried, but we were helpless against it. From the beginning it was there—and that was why we clung to each other so desperately, so passionately, trying to hide it from each other. What have I done for you? In spite of all my love, in spite of all my hopes and dreams for you, what have I brought you? Simply perplexity and trouble and miserable unhappiness. First I stood between you and your work. Then I stood between you and your family. Now, just now, I have been standing between you and your highest self. No, no, no, my dearest, don't lie to yourself, don't pretend any more. This is the truth. We must see it. We must both look at it bravely. Tonight—no matter what happens—I must go back without you. You must stay here—with them.

DAVID

Naida . . .

(They clasp hands and stand a moment looking into each other's eyes.)

NAIDA

Sometimes there is a kind of happiness in the truth, David
Even a terrible truth.

(Naida goes back. David stands a moment looking at her. Mrs. Davis calls off right.)

MRS. DAVIS

David! David!

CURTAIN



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